

THE ADVENTURES IN MODERN MUSIC

# WIRE



ISSUE 181 • MARCH 99 • £2.00 / US \$6.00

**Pan Sonic**  
sine of the times

**Ornette  
Coleman**  
for beginners

**Kevin  
Shields**  
on music after My  
Bloody Valentine

**Alan Licht**  
meets  
**Maryanne  
Amacher**

**Fennesz**

**Joe Morris**

**Shiv Kumar  
Sharma**

**NICK  
CAVE**

**DEATH ROW CONFESSIONS**

**Music of the  
spheres**  
from Pythagoras  
to Stockhausen



ELECTRONICA • AVANT ROCK • BREAKBEAT • JAZZ • MODERN CLASSICAL • GLOBAL

# atrium

# other music from a northern place



jonas kurtén saxophone  
melancholy



evanite henryson cello  
sadness



the timmel quartet violins, viola, cello  
music in darkness  
three swedish string quartets  
dedicated to ingmar bergman

atrium began as a dream, grew into a need, and became a reality.

springing from nordic architecture, culture, design, and nature - this  
unique record label filled a hole that had been long neglected.

in that hole it created a space, and in that space, took its place in time  
and space.

**AVAILABLE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE UK ON APRIL 12TH  
FROM ALL GOOD RECORD STORES**

  
WARNER CLASSICS  
UNITED KINGDOM

Marketed & distributed by Warner Classics UK  
26 Kensington Church Street, London W8 4EP  
A division of Warner Music.  
A Time Warner Company

 atrium

# inside

your monthly exploration of new music

## 12 Bites

**Shiv Kumar Sharma** Sitarist guide **Fennesz** Prere guitarist **Dorgona** C-melody myrmemaker

## 18 Undercurrents #3: Music of the Spheres

A series uncovering the hidden wiring of contemporary music. Rob Young reports on the 20th century war on Pythagorean tuning, as started by Schoenberg and continued by Xenakis, Harry Partch and Tony Conrad

## 22 Pan Sonic

The Finnish duo's take on Techno has become more abstract since they relocated to Barcelona. But Will Montgomery discovers surprising affinities between their music and the Catalan city's streets

## 28 Invisible Jukebox: Kevin Shields

Surfacing for the first time in eight years, My Bloody Valentine's last surviving member listens to tracks by Musica Transonic, Blind Willie Johnson, Derek Bailey, The Dead C and more. Tested by David Keenan

## 32 Nick Cave

In a rare, revealing interview, Old Nick takes David Keenan down the path that leads from the break up of The Birthday Party to the pitch-black murder ballads of The Bad Seeds and beyond

## 40 Joe Morris

Jazz is the teacher and the preacher for the Boston guitarist whose life in music began at a school for troubled teenagers. Today, his abrasive plucking still pours scorn on the academy. By Jan C. Morgan

## 42 Maryanne Amacher

The best kept secret in American New Music is a sound artist whose city-to-city installations have tested extremes of volume and duration while training listeners how to grow a third ear. Appreciation by Alan Licht

## 46 The Primer: Ornette Coleman

The Wire guide to the music of the man who boldly announced *The Shape Of Jazz To Come*, and then lifted it to his wacky of harmonic freedom. By Barry Witherden

# reviews

**54 Soundcheck** March's selected albums and 12" singles, including new releases from Natacha Atlas, Tim Borne, Boredoms, Vincius Cantuaria, Divine Styler, FM Einheit, Hannes Exler, The Fall, Funki Porcino, Lal Neu?, Monolake, Thurston Moore & Evan Parker, Muslingauze, Pan Sonic, Van Dyke Parks, P/L, Pita/Vainio/Charlemagne Palestine, Spectrum & Silver Apples, DJ Spooky, David Sylvian, Robert Wyatt, Otomo Yoshihide and more. **74 Print Run** New music books: The story of Throbbing Gristle, new waves of Can, John Barry and Jan Garbarek, Pauline Oliveros's philosophy. **78 Multimedia** Hywel Davies's virtual forest walk. **80 On Location** Going live: Cecil Taylor & Max Roach's London soundclash, John Cale's new chamber music, DJ Spooky gets deep in Paris, Phil Niblock and friends celebrate 30 years of Experimental Intermedia

**5 Editor's Idea** **6 Letters** **10 Soundings** The pick of the month's festivals and special events  
**12 Global Ear** A vinyl addict feeds the need in Haight Ashbury **52 Charts** **72 Label Directory**  
**84 Out There** March's selected live shows, club spaces and radio **88 Back Issues** **89 Subscribe** and get a FREE Mille Plateaux triple CD or FREE magazine! **90 Epiphanies** The blues according to Skip James



Nick Cave page 32

Pan Sonic page 22

Ornette Coleman page 46

Kevin Shields page 28

# remember SHAKTI

**John McLaughlin**  
**Zakir Hussain**  
**T.H. "Vikku"**  
**Vinayakram**  
**special guest Hariprasad**  
**Chaurasia**

remember  
SHAKTI

2CDs 559 945-2

## **Jazz Meets India**

These artists were brought together for the first time, after 25 years of collaborating in various combinations, by the Asian Music Circuit who produced a tour of the UK in September 1997. Recordings are from London, Birmingham, Southampton and Oldham



**Touring this summer – Look out for details**

Visit us at: [www.ververecords.co.uk](http://www.ververecords.co.uk)

## WIRE

AN INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY JOURNAL

Issue 181 March 1999

£2.80/\$6.50 ISSN 0952-0686 (USPS 0062-31)

45-46 Poland Street - London W1P 3DP - UK

Tel: 0171 439 6422 - Fax: 0171 287 4267

E-mail: [the\\_wire@subsonic.co.uk](mailto:the_wire@subsonic.co.uk)Website: [www.dfuse.com/the-wire](http://www.dfuse.com/the-wire)Editor/Publisher **Tony Herrington**Deputy Editor **Rob Young**Reviews Editor **Chris Bala**Art Editor **Rubin Hewes**Advertising Manager **Daniela Gargula** (0171 494 1340)Projects Manager **Anne Hilde Nees**Subscriptions **Eva Hosae** (0171 734 3555)Administrator **Eva Farrington**

Worth: **Mike Barnes, Ed Baxter, Clive Bell, Chris Blackford, Byron Coley, Richard Cook, Julian Cowley, Christoph Graw, Brian Duguid, David Elbort, Phil England, Andrew Evans, John Fennell, Matt Gyshe, Sasha Free-Jones, Leszko Gray, Andy Hamilton, Richard Henderson, Ken Hollings, David Howell, Velina Pavle Die, David Keenan, Rahma Khazam, Nick Kimberley, Riba Kopf, Art Lange, AC Lee, Howard Marshall, Peter McIntyre, Andy McEwan, Will Morgan, Jon C Morgan, Tim Owen, Edwin Peasgood, Simon Reynolds, Tine Ridge, Mike Shillcock, Peter Shapiro, Chris Sharp, Mark Shaver, David Toop, Dan Warburton, Ben Watson, Don Watson, Vaydanner, Barry Witherden, Douglas Wolf.**

Images: **Amey & Turner, Julian Anderson, Frank Bauer, Drew Becker, Iria Garrolo, Adam Lawrence, Simon Leigh, Magis, Joe Miles, Savage Pencils, Maria Ramstrom, Nick Strangely, Michele Tassinari, Eva Vermoed.**

Cover photo of Nick Cave in London: **Frank Bauer**Additional thanks due to: **Joe Garbutt**

Distribution  
UK & Europe  
USA  
Seymour  
Distributors  
250 West 57th Street  
New York NY 10019 USA  
Tel: 0171 396 8000  
Fax: 0171 396 8002  
USA newssubscriptions  
call toll free 1800 221 3148

Subscriptions  
Rates (12 issues)  
The Wire  
45-46 Poland Street  
London W1P 3DP UK  
Hotline: +44 (0)171 734 3555  
E-mail: [the\\_wire@subsonic.co.uk](mailto:the_wire@subsonic.co.uk)  
UK: £30  
Europe: £35  
USA: \$50.95  
Rest Of World  
\$50.95 + \$35 Surface

Chairman of the Nemara Group **Nain Attallah**Founder **Anthony Wood**In memory to: **John P.**

Wire is a member of the Nemara Group.  
©1999 The Wire Group. All rights reserved. Wire is published monthly.  
For \$50.95 the Wire Tapper is sent. All other prices are for the Wire only.  
Printed in the UK. Printed and published by: The Wire Group Ltd.  
New York, NY 10019. Telephone: 0171 396 8000. Fax: 0171 396 8002.

The Wire magazine is the UK's pre-eminent critical magazine and is published monthly.  
The Wire magazine is published monthly. The Wire magazine is published monthly.  
The Wire magazine is published monthly. The Wire magazine is published monthly.  
The Wire magazine is published monthly. The Wire magazine is published monthly.

editor's  
idea

**A**s part of the research for this month's two-handed Primer on the music of Ornette Coleman (see page 46), I revisit Howard Mandel's interview with the great multi-instrumentalist and composer that appeared in *The Wire* 140 back in October 1995.

The interview is fascinating and revealing on a number of levels, but Ornette seems particularly preoccupied with the process of naming, whether with regard to the outwardly arrogant titles of the albums he released on the Atlantic label in the late 50s and early 60s, and which, it seems, were put there by the record company rather than the musicians, or the benign, holistic philosophy that underpins the music system he calls harmolodics. In the wake of a couple of recent meetings I had with foreign music journalists visiting the UK, more of which in a moment, one phrase in particular lodged in my brain: I never told anybody that I play jazz," Ornette explains, "but that is something that has been identified with me, like blues or whatever." Earlier, he suggests that the *J* word "had to come from an advertising person", the implication being that it has nothing to do with him, and nothing to do with music.

So if Ornette Coleman's music can't be named jazz, what can we call it? More to the point, does it actually need a name? Well, yes and no.

Those foreign journalists I mentioned, one representing an obscure (to me) Scandinavian academic journal, the other a radio reporter from the German equivalent of the BBC, had both come to *The Wire* office in order to interview me on the state of The state of what? Well, music, obviously, but what music exactly? That's what they wanted to know, at least in part. What do we call this music that fills these pages every month? And why do we name it thus when we do?

Take that innocuous looking strip which runs along the bottom of the magazine's cover each month. Read the text within it. Same time ago we changed

that text, tweaked it, thinking no one would notice. Wrong. One of my visitors asks a question: "With regard to that little strip, why did we change 'post-rock' to 'avant rock'? And why did we change 'drum 'n' bass' to 'breakbeat'? OK, I'm ready for this, because I've been asked it before, believe it or not, and anyway it's a variation on a query that seems to get lobbed my way with weary regularity (usually by foreign music journalists as it happens), ie: why do we need music categories?

One answer to that takes me back to Ornette's comments: we don't, it's all about advertising, or rather marketing. But on a more benign level, music categories are also a form of shorthand which allows us all to cut to the chase when we talk to each other about specific (or even non-specific) styles and genres of music.

An example: the text in that thin blue strip on the cover, it's a list of music categories, more or less, put there to give an indication of what a reader might find when they open us up. It doesn't say everything about the magazine or its contents, but it gives an idea, a flavour. But to address my visitor's question directly: Post-rock became avant rock because the latter felt more all-encompassing and able to accommodate the various strains of "specialist" rock-based or inspired musics featured in the magazine, from Sonic Youth to the Red Back catalogue. The former tag, on the other hand, was specific to a style of music-making that had come to be associated with a loose collective of groups that emerged in the mid-'90s and whose music utilised the tools and trappings of rock but inverted its dynamic, emphasising texture rather than rhythm, drones rather than chord changes, anarchy rather than ego, incorporating influences from a number of parallel initiatives such as Minimalist composition, Ambient electronics blah, blah, blah, blah. You see, it's easier just to say post-rock and be damned with it (it fits better on a magazine cover too).

TONY HERRINGTON

**Stuck to the front of the April issue of *The Wire*:  
The Wire Tapper 3 — the third in our series of exclusive cover mount CDs. Over an hour of new and unedited music drawn from the outer limits of planet sound. FREE!**

**On sale: Tuesday 30 March**

**The Wire on the Web: [www.dfuse.com/the-wire](http://www.dfuse.com/the-wire)  
The Wire newsgroup: [www.onelist.com/subscribe.cgi/thewire](http://www.onelist.com/subscribe.cgi/thewire)**

# letters

**Write to:** Letters, *The Wire*, 45-46 Poland Street, London W1V 3DF, or fax 0171 287 4767, or e-mail [the\\_wire@ukonline.co.uk](mailto:the_wire@ukonline.co.uk). Please include a full name and address. Every letter published wins a FREE CD

## Lester rides again

Although I'm wary of conniving lateral connections out of the air, your Undercurrents #2 (Destroy All Music, *The Wire* 180) made me think of Lester Bangs. He once went on an in-depth droll on why *Metal Machine Music* was the best album ever made, and also included it in his "Reasonable Guide To Horrible Noise".

Another of Lester's pieces floated from the most impractical tangent. Other than the Futurists, the "White Noise Supremacists" was one that Bangs put together on a completely different topic, but it came to mind when I saw no mention of The Yardbirds in Destroy All Music. (Yes, he once did a real big one on them.) The Yardbirds were the first rock 'n' roll group to put feedback on a phonograph, consider such a soloing lateral as Sir Cosmo Dodd, and then there's Kraftwerk (Bangs got a polite lampoon in at the time of *Autobahn*). I truly hate to elongate the carping, but the world's first electronic rock group might have mentored a mention (did he ever write about *The Silver Apples*)?

While we're splitting the hairs of relativity, I think I'm really begging off on the Valerie Solanas angle. Last mention of Bangs, I promise: one of his craziest jobs took the piss out of all of the people who ever claimed a stake in the 'boring' of punk, capping it off with proposing himself as the original kiddie. Christ, if memory serves me correct, Solanas's name cropped up along the way. Call me a hypocrite, but crazed attempted murder doesn't fit anywhere in my punk pantheon.

**Ganaim** Cork, Ireland

## Sunk by a sub

In the original version of my recent mini-history of Futurism in Music (Undercurrents Destroy All Music, *The Wire* 180) there lurked an even-more-than-usually convoluted sentence — which I won't inflict on you. A *Wire* copy editor — struggling to unscrew me on to deadline and guessing valiantly from context — inserted the wrong clarifying names, so that it read: "Russolo, the inventor of musique concrete, was notoriously self-effacing and persistent, Mannetti, his denouncer, was a voluble pedant with a gift for shock-logic, careerism, and not much more." Well, no, not quite: the "voluble pedant" was in fact meant to imply Lettrist Maurice LeMaitre, not Mannetti, and the persistence here was intended as a characteristic of Pierre Schaeffer rather than Russolo. So that the pant being made — an irony almost too slight to bear: the emphasis this correction gives it — is that while LeMaitre and Mannetti both thrived on explosive public anguishing, and while Schaeffer and Russolo shared a bent for paranozing

research, theoretical and practical, Schaeffer was being attacked by LeMaitre for knowing little of Russolo, and for attributing Russolo's major work to Mannetti.

**Mark Sinker** London

## Beats surrender

After some considerable time being my lip on this topic, issue 180 has led me to cave in and choose one aspect of your otherwise sexy magazine — that is the Critical Beats section of reviews by Peter Shapiro. It seems obvious that he has a fairly thorough grasp on the HiHop/Hipsterism and of things, but his coverage of recent Jungle, Techno, and Speed Garage 12"s displays a complete lack of knowledge of the scenes in question. His review of the Kemistry & Storm DJ Kicks CD (same issue), where his analysis that it all sounds the same is very much akin to comments of the older generation on modern music throughout recent decades, is testament to this. He has, with three reviews, dismissed one of the best new labels of the year in Virus (run by Ed Rush and Optical).

OK, so the two-step and 4/4 beat may seem a monotonous and uninteresting foundation for many records, but for some it is a recognised canvas that can be used to convey more darker and inventive sounds. Extending the canvas analogy, you need to satisfy the curator (DJ) before you are able to hang your work in the gallery — once you've gained recognition for this, you can build your 50ft sculptures wherever you want. A prime example of this is the Basic Channel/Chain Reaction sound that was formerly part of the Detroit/Berlin Techno scene — a 4/4 beat was used for many of these records to transmit the twisted dubby landscapes to converted Technoheads, and gained recognition as a result. Now, in the case of most of these protagonists, the beat has been dropped and they are operating outside the scene, but it was the scene and the recognised beat that took them to their following. Let's have someone who follows the scenes review these records.

**David Moyrhan** via e-mail

## Swiss on a roll

Your editorial on the likelihood or otherwise of success for the group Steamboat Switzerland was very entertaining (*The Wire* 180). However, they are not likely to have much success when possibly the one magazine that can help them, namely *The Wire*, gives no details about where their CD might be acquired. I like the sound of it, so if you could supply me with a contact address, I can increase their sales by one at least.

Steamboats are big in Switzerland, and people seem

prepared to lavish vast sums on keeping them going, much as railway enthusiasts do in the UK. OK, so these are all anomalies to the likes of you, but remember, fans of the music covered in *The Wire* are just as weird to the rest of the population. Steamboat Switzerland seems quite an appropriate name.

**Ian Boyle** via e-mail

*The Steamboat Switzerland CD in question. Live, is released by Ute, PO Box 53, CH-1789 Lugnora, Switzerland. E-mail: [mlphakas@access.ch](mailto:mlphakas@access.ch) — Ed*

## Primer cuts

As one of the few magazines capable of writing seriously about turntablism, I found Peter Shapiro's Primer on the subject (*The Wire* 179) as interesting as expected and hope that this, combined with the excellent free CD subscription offer, will be sufficient to pique the interest of many of your readers to dig a little further into what to my mind is one of the few forms of music not currently suffering from creative paralysis. By its very definition the Primer could not possibly be definitive, although it would have been nice to see a mention given to Om Records' recent Deeper Concentration compilation, a truly excellent sequel to the slightly patchy Deep Concentration, as this gives an indication of some of the promising talents just beginning to emerge.

I would, however, like to point out that the photograph on page 45 captioned Peanut Butter Wolf, and which was also used in issue 160, is in fact his isabimate Rob Bass aka Funkst, whose debut album of sparse desolate landscapes, *Sensim. Activity*, was one of the better albums of 1997.

1999 promises to be something of a landmark year for turntablism, with new albums due from The Automator, DJ Faust, Prince Paul and Peanut Butter Wolf among others. Personally, I'm looking forward even more to the debut albums due from Mr Dibbs and Kid Koala, as both promise to be hugely entertaining. And if we're extremely fortunate, Cut Chemist's promised mix album might even see the light of day.

**Steve Coates** Farnham

*For a review of Deeper Concentration, see The Compiler column, issue 180 — Ed*

## Rewind correcter

Although I've been a *Wire* reader since 1991 (and a subscriber since 1997), this is the first time I send you a letter. During all this time I've bought a lot of records based on your recommendations.

Royal Festival Hall  
Queen Elizabeth Hall  
Purcell Room

## Edge of a dream... the 80s

Sat 6 March RFH 7.30pm  
**City of Birmingham  
Symphony Orchestra**  
Sir Simon Rattle conductor  
John Williams guitar  
CBSO Chorus  
Lutoslawski Symphony No 3  
Takemitsu To the Edge of Dream  
Vera L'arc en ciel, Palma  
Adams Harmonium

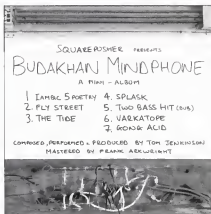
Sun 7 March QEH 7.45pm  
**London Sinfonietta**  
James Wood conductor  
Sound Intermedia  
London Sinfonietta Voices\*  
Steve Reich "Tehlim"  
Jonathan Harvey Bhakti  
QEH at 8.30pm: pre-concert talk  
with Jonathan Harvey

Tickets £5-£15  
Box Office 0171 960 4242  
Free brochure available  
[www.sbc.org.uk](http://www.sbc.org.uk)

Mon 15 March RFH 7.30pm  
**City of Birmingham  
Symphony Orchestra**  
Sir Simon Rattle conductor  
Illustrated talk by Simon Rattle  
followed by Nicholas Maw  
Odyssey

Wed 17 March QEH 7.45pm  
**London Sinfonietta**  
Oliver Knussen conductor  
Sound Intermedia  
Knussen Higglety Pigglety Pop.  
Gochoert perf's  
Where the Wild Things Are

Fri 26 March RFH 7.30pm  
**City of Birmingham  
Symphony Orchestra**  
Sir Simon Rattle conductor  
Vodim Repin viola  
Kurtág Grabmal für Stephan  
Gubaydulina Offertorium  
Birtwistle Earth Dance



AVAILABLE FROM 1ST MARCH 1999  
WARPLP62/WARPCD62

[WWW.WARPRECORDS.COM](http://WWW.WARPRECORDS.COM)



playing with time



mark van hoen  
playing with time

AMB 8953 CD



# jim o'rouke eureka



a new album released 11.99 on cd & 15.99 on vinyl

domino recording co ltd po box 2039 london w11 2xx  
send us see for domino music catalogue

This letter is to congratulate all *The Wire* staff for so many years of great music for my soul and, especially, for all January issues. *The Wire* is the only magazine that knows how to summarise each year in a short and precise way, without unnecessary nostalgia. Almost all magazines at the end of each year miss complete issues, writing long articles, reviews and big and indulgent summaries.

Your January 1999 issue (179) has the precise density. The editorial suggests what the near future will be like, the Pros and Cons of the contributors are enjoyable. Because I don't live in Europe, I couldn't see the concerts and live presentations you mention, but I agree with most of the top 50 records. In spite of that, I think your list is not complete, because it put aside some important records from 1998.

How can you forget Nemess On-Line from The Legendary Pink Dots (when are you going to dedicate them a big article)? Or Death In June's *Take Control* And *Core*, or the debut from Der Blutschank (*Arise Julius*)! I also think that Uls Lyflike, The Notwist's *Shrink*, Talvin Singh's *OK*, The Body Lovers (*It's Grra*, another article please!) and Spain's Manta Ray's *Proque Ray Grra* should be in your list. Anyway, your summary is surprisingly close to me.

Juan Carlos Ballesta Caracas, Venezuela

## Milton's keen

Writing to *The Wire* has been an awaited desire to me. I always wondered if a Brazilian bloke's opinion would interest you. Now I have my chance, thanks to Simon Fay's letter (Letters, *The Wire* 179). Simon states his wish to know more about Milton Nascimento or other Brazilian musicians. In my opinion, Brazilian artists never had the real opportunity they deserve. Samba is known worldwide by its feeling, by its African-rooted rhythms, but you all miss a lot by not knowing the lyrics. Milton Nascimento (aka Bitchu), an artist who built his career on the post-bossa nova movement, has a lot to say, despite his beautiful songs. He is one of the few singers who really sings the lyrics with feeling, the guy goes really deep in it. I wish you all could understand what Milton says in his singing, because there is much more than you can feel. And I must say, I always get pissed off when somebody relates Brazilian (or any other kind of) music to this "exotic" feeling. Brazil's songs are as genuine as any other country's music, and our people express themselves better when singing. I would like to open my e-mail address to Simon Fay just in case this guy wants some info about Milton and other Brazilian artists.

Rodrigo Marçal Rio De Janeiro, Brazil  
(catelbills@combr)

## Jukebox Jim

After reading the short bog of Jim O'Rourke that accompanied the Invisible Jukebox in issue 179, I felt something was rotten, or at least missing, in Chicago. I ventured back through your feature on him in the November 97 issue (165) and realised that my feeling

was confirmed by the fact that neither piece mentioned, even in passing, his association with Industrial group Illusion Of Safety. Overlooked or omitted?

Granted, he has tweaked notes with a ton of people, but Rob Young's statement that "in the US, he is best known for the eccentric, razorbladed pop of Gastr Del Sol" potentially excludes a significant portion of Mr O'Rourke's career. Many of us first encountered O'Rourke's work over collage radio airwaves, backed by a genre overflowing with reverberating sheet metal and samples from sensationalist news broadcasts, miscellaneous porn videos, and Blade Runner. His name appears on at least three proper IOS releases — *Historical*, *Cancer*, and *Probe* — and as a quick credit on *Destruction*. (He may also have contributed to *Water Seeks Its Own Level*, but I can't verify as I know longer own the disc.)

For the Invisible Jukebox, Young should have played the opening track off *Historical* and asked for O'Rourke's thoughts and reactions to his old stamping grounds, especially after David Keenan's description of IOS in issue 177 as "US Industrial schlock troopers".

Michael Woodring Somerville, MA, USA

Quoting Jim O'Rourke from his Invisible Jukebox: "I could play with good timing if I wanted, I just don't care. I let other people have good technique." So, why not stop making music altogether and let others do that? They mostly like me more successful than him.

Luciano Margorani Milan, Italy

## Maple leaf rant

I think it's pretty amazing and inspiring that Montreal's Constellation label has promoted *Godspeed You Black Emperor!* and *Do Make Say Think* to the point of getting some much-deserved props from you folks. However, it all makes me feel like I should rant about some other (also mainly guitar-based) Canadian bands making equally compelling sounds. From Vancouver's *Pigment Vehicle* to Ottawa's *Wooden Stars*, *Snailhouse*, *Okara* (RIP), *Weights And Measures*, *Kepler* and *Prisms* come home, to Toronto's *Peckola*, *Smallmouth* (RIP), *Blake*, *Holding Pattern*, *Blue Light Blockade*, *Living Water Assembly*, *GUH*, *Eric Chéniaux* and the almighty *CCMC* (not to mention *London*, *Oniano's* *Nihilist Spasm Band* and tons of other bands in other towns). There's lots of music going on in Canada that's just as great as *Do Make's* or *Godspeed's*. I guess it's chiefly a matter of press promotion, of course, but here's hoping you'll be hearing something from at least a few of these other groups, too.

Craig Dunsmeir Toronto, Canada

## Chaos in expansion

The letter from Gareth Melford (*The Wire* 180) regarding the review of *Loris D'Amico's* book on Norway's Black Metal Underground, was far commoner: he read a book and didn't like it. We read the book, and far from myself being a Black Metal enthusiast — or

politically left or right — I found the book very well written and the research exhaustive.

As for co-author Michael Moynihan being quoted in the various right-wing publications mentioned by Melford, I find this no more alarming than *Public Enemy* using Louis Farrakhan quotes on their record covers, or the samples used by *Fun-Da-Mental*, or the stance taken by the late *Musikgaze* (aka *Brjn Jones* — a Plancian bearing a Welsh name).

Moynihan and Sederberg's book is published by Feral House, who proclaim themselves to be a "publisher who refuses to be domesticated." They cover a variety of "taboo" subjects with a very anti-censorship stance — if you want to read about a certain subject, then it's there for you.

As regards the various atrocities in the Black Metal world — is it any different from the scene around *Death Row Records* and *Tupac Shakur*, *Suge Knight* and their chums in the USA? And where do Japanese Black Metalers (sigh) fit in? I know one thing — I wish some record company would re-release "Sugar Sugar" by *The Archies* in time for the last summer of the century. Take care everyone — it's a wild world.

Tim Jones Manchester

## Low end game

Re Jeff Naff/Mike Barrett bantane versus tenor sax argument (Letters, *The Wire* 180). For goodness sake stop messing around, of course it's a bantane solo on "Walk On The Wild Side." Never believe anything a 12 year old tells you either.

Martin Archer Sheffield

## South American way

Each month from March 1998, I have received your interesting worldwide musical voyage, with beautiful photographic artwork and intelligent written texts. It's our window to other musical universes, here in the Southern Hemisphere where American and Latin pop music have another colony in mass media. For this reason, *The Wire* is an open mind medium!

Many congratulations on your fine free CD, *The Wire Tapper 2* (177), especially because of Tom Ze (what a joyful piece, with Afro-contemporary rhythms and melodies!) It was an early Christmas gift!

Ricardo Paredes-Quintana Santiago, Chile

## Corrections

Issue 178 In Soundcheck, the photo used to illustrate the review of *This Heart's Absent* (page 50) actually showed Terry Edwards And The Scapegoats Whoops! Apologies to all concerned. In Out There, Roscoe Mitchell was described as a 'former' member of The Art Ensemble Of Chicago, he is in fact still a member of the group, it's Joseph Jarman who has left. Issue 179 In the Bar on Anthony Rother, his version of "Trans Europe Express" was cited as being part of his *Sex With The Machines* EP. It isn't, it's an EP in its own right, released by Rother's Psi4Net label.



# INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL MUSIQUE ACTUELLE VICTORIAVILLE 20<sup>to</sup>24 MAY 1999

## PROGRAMMATION

PETER BRÖTZMANN TENTET  
INA BITTOVA - VLADIMIR VACLAVEK  
MILFORD GRAVES - JOHN ZORN  
PEGGY LEE ENSEMBLE  
FATIMA MIRANDA « Diapassion »  
MAXIME RIOUX « Automates Ki »  
MERZBOW  
KAMPEC DOLORES  
SPACEHEADS  
PAUL PLIMLEY TRIO  
KLAXON GUEULE  
DAVID KRISTIAN SOLO  
KATHLEEN YEARWOOD SOLO  
HOAHO - ISO  
GODSPEED YOU BLACK EMPEROR  
DUVAL - LEE - OSWALD - PRENTICE  
JEAN-MARC MONTERA - MICHEL DONEDA - ERIK M  
GÜNTER MÜLLER - JIM O'ROURKE  
LE QUAN NINH - ZACK ZETTEL - ATAU TANAKA  
IVO PERELMAN - C.T. STRING QUARTET  
ANNIE GOSFIELD - ROGER KLEIR  
MUJICAN (Dunmall, Levin, Rogers, Tiplett)  
ELLIOTT SHARP - TERRAPLANE - DJ SOUL SLINGER  
CHRISTIAN MARCLAY - THURSTON MCKEY - LEE RANALDO

TO RECEIVE OUR FREE BROCHURE, PLEASE CONTACT US AT:  
Productions Plateforme Inc.  
C.P. 460 Victoriaville, Québec, Canada. G6P 6T3  
tél: (819) 752-7912 fax: (819) 758-4370  
fima@cdcbf.qc.ca  
www.cdcbf.qc.ca/FIMAV  
www.cdcbf.qc.ca/DisquesVicto



*Tastily seductive...the music is both modest and unbelievably ambitious. There is nothing like it.* The Wire

CMJ  
100

Arto Lindsay is a true original. His music combines the sensuality of Brazilian samba with the 'dubby trippy' edge of the downtown New York scene. On a very rare visit to the UK, Arto's band (which includes Brandon Ross, Melvin Gibbs and Carl Hovnan) will perform material from the highly acclaimed last three albums as well as brand new songs.

# arto lindsay band

APRIL/JUNE 1999 TOUR

Fri 23 BIRMINGHAM LSO Centre 0121 236 5622

presented by Birmingham Arts

Sat 24 OXFORD St. Barnabas Church 01865 706 600

presented by Oxford Community Arts Festival

Sun 25 NEWCASTLE Playhouse 0191 270 5151

Sun 27 LIVERPOOL Unity Theatre 0151 789 4888

Thu 29 LEEDS Irish Centre 0113 245 9570/274 2486

presented by Leeds Arts

Fri 30 LONDON Purcell Room 0171 960 4201/4242

Sat 1 BRIGHTON Sallis Gallery 01273 709709

presented by Brighton Festival



# SAN SonicConcrete 19.20.21 March AT THE ICA

AN EXPLORATION OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC

HEAR LIVE ELECTRONICA & SEMINAL ELECTRONIC MUSIC SEE FILM AND VIDEO FROM ARCHIVE TO PROMO AND BEYOND EXPERIENCE THE VIRTUOSIC 3D SOUND THAT IS BEAST WITH 30 LOUDSPEAKERS! CREATE SOUND USING TOYS, GAMES, INSTALLATIONS & THE SONIC CONCRETE WEB SITE

ONLINE AT [www.sonicartnetwork.org/sonicconcrete](http://www.sonicartnetwork.org/sonicconcrete)

TICKETS FROM THE ICA



# soundings march

Festivals, happenings and special events



Spring Head Jack at Sonic Concrete

## Sonic Concrete

Multi-art weekend of 90s electronics held up against the legacy of pioneering electronic music from mid-century. Sonic Arts Network, in conjunction with Scanner, present a programme of film and live performance at London's Institute of Contemporary Art. The line-up is as follows: Friday 19 Jonty Harrison and the BEAST sound system diffuse seminal musique concrete works by Francis Bayle, Pierre Schaeffer and Pierre Henry, followed by a screening of films on Edgar Varese, Victor Grauer, Thurston Moore and Add N To X, while percussion/electronics improviser Ansuman Biswas and Ben Higham play live. Saturday 20 A special edition of Robin Rimbaud's Electronic Lounge featuring the second UK live appearance by Berlin's Pole, and Spring Heel Jack premiering a nine-deck turntable experiment, QJing in the bar from Scanner and Tony Morley. Sunday 21 Pulp's Mark Webber and composer Robert Worby exhume some long-out-of-print experimental music films including Tony Conrad's 'Ticker movie: Coming Attractions' (music by LaMonte Young, Terry Riley, Charlemagne Palestine, Alvin Curran and more). And Hertz MacLusie, wife of proto-Velvets member Angus, introduces Ja Coher's 1967 psychedelic magic-mirror classic, *Invasion Of Thunderbolt Popo*. London ICA, 19-21 March, \$10-\$18 (Friday and Saturday/\$18-\$16 (Sunday). 0171 930 3647

## Song Offerings

In the ninth annual series of 20th century chamber music hosted and performed by The Nash Ensemble, the group pay tribute to British New Music from the last 50 years. Harrison Birtwistle (9 March) and Michael Tippett (23) are given special nights dedicated to their music, while younger British composers Mark-Anthony Turnage, Jonathan Harvey, Julian Anderson and David Matthews

are listed on 18. All three nights are backed up with pre-performance talks and discussions beginning at 6.30pm. London Purcell Room, 9, 18 and 23 March, concerts 7.30pm, \$10/\$7 D171 960 4242

## Man With A Movie Camera

Sheffield soundscapers The Nursery have produced a contemporary soundtrack for Dziga Vertov's Soviet silent, *Man With A Movie Camera* (they're in illustrious company: the last composer to attempt the feat was Pierre Henry). Premiered at the Bradford Film Festival, the show will embark on a nationwide tour through March and April, visiting Bradford National Museum Of Film (110 March), Glasgow GFT (25), Leicester Phoenix Arts (27), London ICA (10 April), Edinburgh Filmhouse (14), Sterling MacRobert (15), Cardiff Chapter Arts (18), Bristol Watershed (19), Derby Metro Cinema (22), Manchester Cornerhouse (28), Sheffield Showroom (29), Nottingham Broadway (30). Info 0114 272 8726

## Syzygy

Digital denizens (Q|phat| Q|ntip) and polymedia specialists CCRI co-curate a month-long installation, mixing audio, video and performance in a meditation on the impending millennium. London Beaconsfield, 26 February-28 March (Fridays-Sundays, 4-11pm, \$3/\$2, 0171 582 6465

## Waldscenen

British composer Hywel Davies has created a sonic installation for Artsway Contemporary Art Gallery in the New Forest. [see Multimedia page 78]. Translating as Forest Scenes, Davies's installation is based on the contrasting experiences of living and working in the countryside, and visiting as a tourist. Lymington Artsway, to 11 April (Wednesdays-Sundays), midday-4pm, free, 01590 682260

## K-RAA-K Festival

Belgian distribution company K-RAA-K have assembled a sturdy line-up of new electronics, noise art and underground Techno for this three day event across Belgium. The first night brings together Norway's Brandsdal, Dean Roberts's White Winged Moth project, and Zoppo, as well as various local improvisors (Bruges De Keik, 25 March). The big night follows, with a line-up that includes Farmers Manual, Noto, Village Of Savonja, Aulus Plane, Flying Saucer Attack, Young Farmers Oam Future and more (Gent Democracy, 26). To round things off, US Techno operatives Low Res and Mannequin Lung (Plug Research) plus Pan American play alongside Belgium's Wio vs Kahn (Hasselt Zaal Belge, 27). For information, tel/fax 00 32 50 28 00 BB, e-mail [kraa@holymet.be](mailto:kraa@holymet.be), Web [come.to/kraa/](http://come.to/kraa/)

## The Opening

In S-Hertenbosch, The Netherlands, a new music centre is launched with a five day festival centred around the music of John Zorn. Zorn himself will be in attendance to lead rehearsals and direct performances of chamber works like *Strydom* and his freshly minted string quartets. There will also be a gathering of Dutch improvisors under the Cobra aegis, and a selection of *Mosada* and *Ganne Pees* played by The Aquarius Ensemble. S-Hertenbosch Musiccenter, 17-21 March, info e-mail [Musiccenter@swin.nl](mailto:Musiccenter@swin.nl)

## Taktlos 99

Annual free music fest burning simultaneously in two Swiss cities Zurich and Basel. This year's participants include The Lindsay Cooper Project, where the former Rock In Opposition bassoonist has her compositions woven by an improv cast of Vervyn Weston, Phil Minton, Maggie Nichols, Paul Jayashina, Dean Brodick, Ian Mitchell and Robyn Schulzowsky. They share a bill with PartyOrist, a trio featuring sampled Bob Oserbag and Oloro Yoshinide with drag queen Justin Bond, and the guitar trio Luga Archetti/Uchirashi Kazuhisa/Bill Hongt (Basel 25 March, Zurich 26). The live electronics/tumbalist trio of Diane Labrosse, Rye Mon and Martin Tereushi wheel up on the following two days, together with vocalist Shelley Hirsch and OJ Elve in duo, and bassoonist Karen Borca's jazz quartet with Rob Brown, Reggie Workman and Pheroeum a.k.a. [Basel 26, Zurich 27]. The final sessions feature Oloro again with Japanese vocalist Tenko, Rho (featuring former Stood, Hazen & Walkman celer Dan Weaver), and an experimental guitar jam with diaphanous Hans Reichel, Uchihashi and Canada's Rene Lusser (Basel 27, Zurich 28). Basel Kulturwerk Kaserne and Zurich Rote Fabrik, 25-28 March, info tel 00 41 1 481 9143, e-mail [info@taktlos.ch](mailto:info@taktlos.ch)

NATACHA ATLAS  
gedida



The third album released \$22.99  
contains the forthcoming single  
'one brief moment' recorded  
with david arnold

out march 2nd.



Reach the Rock

featuring an original score by:

**John McEntire**

and new songs by:

Tortoise

The Sea and Cake

Bundy K. Brown

Polvo

and

Dianogah

www.hellrecords.com  
hell@hellrecords.com  
1351 N. Milwaukee, Suite 207  
Chicago, IL 60647

Distributed by Symbiotic  
lyric@lymbic.net  
888.802.2300

# global ear

## San Francisco

I'm naming as the bus I boarded in Market Street grinds up the hill towards the Haight Ashbury district. Along the route we have picked up a diverse collection of San Francisco's citizens and eccentric celebrities, including one guy whose body odour is so intense that he is eventually evicted from the bus by the driver. Outraged by this personal humiliation, he publicly swallows his ticket in protest, setting off a smattering of laughter from the other passengers. By now the rain has eased slightly and the bus has reached the heart of Haight, once the breeding ground for the American counter culture and, for a few fleeting months in 1967, the main stage for the entire Summer of Love. It was just a few blocks from here in 'Hashbury' where The Grateful Dead took up residence at 710 Ashbury Street. Although they moved out years ago their presence continues to haunt the neighbourhood. Behind the psychedelic stained-glass windows of the majority of local head shops there bears the bearded face of Dead guitarist Jerry Garcia. If it's an obvious totem to pull in the passing tourist, it's also a positive sign to the true believer that nothing has really changed since his death in 1995.

**San Francisco souvenirs:**  
Ultraman squares up to the Ultra-Monsters



A survey of sounds from around the planet. This month...



For me, however, things have changed dramatically. The last time I prowled the Haight was in 1993, accompanied by the music writer/cultural historian Byron Coley in search of late 60s and early 70s free jazz records. Back then they were in plentiful supply at near rock bottom prices. We had hit at a time when seasoned record collectors had been duped by the music industry into trading in their 'worthless' vinyl for 'superior sounding' CDs. If they would later learn to regret the upgrade, the source of their future misery was a joyful payoff for a couple of vinyl junkies with nothing better to do than forage for records. I acquired the bedrock of a serious jazz collection in the several boxes of obscure, heart-fluttering vinyl treasures brought home from that landmark trip.

Six years later, it's a different story — the once-buoyant racks have been picked clean. Flipping through the limo, dog-eared sleeves at Reckless and Recycled Records reveals a discarded batch of dated punk rock, AOR, limp wristed folk, Easy Listening kitsch and classical gilder-but-mouldies. Thinking they must be keeping the good stuff back from me, I throw a few names at the guy behind the counter, who has just begun nodding along to Glenn Gould's *Plays Bach*. He sighs wearily, like he's seen my type before. Just about every record hunter passing this way is after the same elusive quarry, he explains. "We had a lad in here the other day who asked me where our 'Stockhausen' section was," he continues. "Five years ago and hardly anybody had heard any Stockhausen. Now he's one of our most requested artists."

The longer we talk it becomes clear that no matter how obscure, there is no musical corner anywhere on this planet that hasn't been thoroughly probed, listed and published. My worst fears have been realised: the so-called underground has been forcibly surfaced. What was once considered unobtainable or weird is now embraced by a new generation of street smart, stocking-capped

turntablists, samplers and fans of Jim O'Rourke, Tortoise and Sonic Youth. The golden days of vinyl in the former Gold Rush city have gone the way of ghost towns. There are no secret pleasures left to us.

Disillusioned, I walk up to Amoeba Records, a store which originated in nearby Berkeley but has now opened a second branch in Haight inside what looks like a former bowling alley. The huge space has been installed with long metal racks of CDs (new and used), in every conceivable genre, a vast selection of vinyl (ditto) and even a performance area where a constantly changing roster of wannabes is allowed to play and experiment (to quote Joni Mitchell) for free. I desultorily flick through the racks while some turntable duo is scratching their stuff — James Brown and one of Stockhausen's greatest hits. With an evening bill promising a choir of throat singers, I decide to stick around. Heading for the Experimental section, I am somewhat appalled to discover that Amoeba rack every Keith Hano CD ever made. The revelation has even harder with the realisation that I already own all of them! I am equally horrified to discover that the store's groaning Merzbow, Massina and Boredoms sections can't surprise me either. Now I know what a sad Paul Weller fan must feel like. After a cursory flip through the vinyl, a stroll round the jazz room and a neck craning look at the fine selection of original 60s concert posters, I head out empty handed and hail a taxi, my vinyl hunger unsatisfied.

The next morning my hunt takes me on a crawl up just beyond Haight to Clement Street. Heroes Club is a small Japanese toy store in San Francisco's East Asian district. Its window display is crammed with models of Godzilla, Ultraman and their various mutated enemies, all sculpted in multicoloured vinyl, all of them irresistible. I can't help myself. I have to have them. Their very touch triggers that same naive, scarp-tingling rush of discovery I experienced in Haight six years ago. Free jazz records or plastic Godzillas — it makes no difference to a vinyl addict in serious need of a fix.

**EDWIN POUNCEY**

Royal Festival Hall  
Queen Elizabeth Hall  
Purcell Room



**SBC & THE SHED PRESENT A DARING DOUBLE BILL**

**DAVID THOMAS & TWO PALE BOYS**


**KEVIN COYNE & THE PARADISE BAND**

Thurs 8 April 1999 7.45pm **Queen Elizabeth Hall**  
0171 960 4242 £12/£10

8 April: Sheffield Triangles, Halifax 01423 555555  
10 April: The Stone, North Yorkshire 01903 656464  
12 April: Merton Girls, Newcastle 0191 5244100


Produced by **4** **UK** **TV**  
CHANNEL 4  
A U.K. CHANNEL

**sbc**



**TALK TALK • HAMMERSMITH**  
THE FINAL LONDON CONCERT ON CD

pond life

Sales and marketing by Voiceprint  distributed by Pinnacle



# Songlines

Journeys in world music

**First issue on sale now**

**The new world music quarterly magazine**

Includes a **free** world exclusive CD from Wicklow Records  
Available at HMV, Tower Records, Virgin Megastores and other good record stores  
For subscriptions call 0181-422 4562 Fax 0181-609 0404 E-mail [info@gramophone.co.uk](mailto:info@gramophone.co.uk) Web site [www.gramophone.co.uk](http://www.gramophone.co.uk)

**£2.95**



**The Chieftains**  
Go with the heart

**Cuban son**  
The first time guitar

**The sitar**  
The first time sitar as the first of Songlines

# bites

## Shiv Kumar Sharma

### World trade santoor

In Indian classical music, Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma is the leading exponent of the santoor. Mastery of this cousin of the hammered dulcimer is achievement enough, but Pandit Sharma has effectively inflated a tradition for the instrument. He commenced musical study at the age of five, under the tutelage of his father, Ume Dutt Sharma, a distinguished vocalist and percussionist.

"I had no idea that one day I would play an instrument which nobody had ever attempted in classical music," Sharma states. "One day my father told me, 'Now you have to learn this instrument.' Without my knowledge, he had done a lot of research into it. He was a vocalist, and never performed on the santoor, but he guided me

and taught me the basics. At the time I was reluctant to take it up, simply because I did not find it suitable for playing the kinds of music we were singing at the time. But, you know, my father was my guru, and in our musical tradition you have to obey."

Sharma's early reluctance is understandable. Stringed instruments such as the sitar and sarod carried great prestige in Indian music, but the santoor, whose strings are struck with wooden mallets, was consigned to the lower status of an accompanying instrument. In traditional terms, the percussive mode of playing signalled its inherent limitations. "In Indian classical music, every stringed instrument is striving to reproduce vocal idiom," he explains, "for example sustaining a note." Played conventionally, the santoor lent itself to staccato effects, but seemed incapable of the desired legato. "I started performing and there were discouraging reactions from different quarters," he says. "This pushed me into a situation where I felt I must do something." So began a process of painstaking investigation into how the instrument might be adapted to render it viable for classical soloing. He sought a different kind of tonal quality, soothing and soft, and experimented with fundamentals such as the size of the sounding box, gauge of the strings, its pitch, tuning system and the kind of mallets used. "Initially, there was

a lot of scepticism amongst musicologists and musicians about the capacity of this instrument to become established," he continues. "With the passage of time, as I discovered techniques, people changed their minds and the instrument was accepted." The opening section of his latest CD, *Sompradyaya*, demonstrates how beautifully the santoor can now sustain a note.

Shiv Kumar Sharma's name first came to the attention of Western listeners in 1967, with *Call Of The Valley*, a groundbreaking collaboration with the flute virtuoso Hariprasad Chaurasia, evoking their native Kashmir. "You know, when we recorded that we never imagined that this record was going to become so popular and convert so many people into listeners to Indian classical music," says Sharma. "They were given something which was purely based on the raga system but in a condensed form, that's why they appreciated it. Gradually, they became more interested and could attend a classical concert for three hours."

Issued by Virgin subsidiary Real World, *Sompradyaya* should expand his audience still further. It is a radiant evening raga, luminously seductive. Here Pandit Sharma duets with his son, Rahul. "When I was five years old my father started teaching me. With Rahul I felt, now, let me watch him, whether he is inclined towards music, whether he shows interest. Then I should teach him.

Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma (left) with his son Rahul



When he was 12 or 13 years old, like a hobby, I imitated him. Now he is totally focused on santoor."

Father and son performed together at last year's WOMAD festival, prior to recording at the Real World studio. Though Pandit Sharma has performed regularly in the UK over the past 30 years — as documented on a series of excellent live CDs on the London Navras label — he found the festival especially exciting. He approached the subsequent studio session with some apprehension, but immediately recognised a conducive environment. "A live concert is a different kind of experience, especially for our kind of music," he comments. "Our music is all created in front of the listeners, without any prior rehearsals. It happens there, with the ambience, with the listener's reaction. I was very happy to see that between the records' booth and the studio where we were playing there is a waterfall. As if we were with nature. In India, for centuries our music has been connected with nature."

Pandit Sharma is singularly well placed to comment upon the constantly evolving nature of Indian music. "I have seen how Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan was recorded by Real World. He attempted many things which were very interesting, and people liked it very much. Maybe in the future we also can do some kind of joint venture, not as a gimmick, but as a serious attempt to play music in some new combination."

More specifically, he harbours a tantalising ambition. "There are similar instruments to the santoor in different parts of the world," Sharma says. "In China there's an instrument called yang chin, in Germany there's the hackbret, the hammered dulcimer in Irish music, and the cimbalom in Hungary. I am thinking of doing some kind of collaboration where these come together. The same kind of instrument, but different cultures, different countries, different types of musical expression." **JULIAN COWLEY**

*Sampredya is out now on Real World*



## Dorgon

### Mythmaking in C

About a year ago, an intriguing looking artefact

appeared in a few specialist record stores. It was a CD packed inside two pieces of raw cardboard. On the back, a sticker claimed it was recorded for the Bluebird label in 1936, namechecking Raymond Scott, Art Blakey, Jimmy Guthrie, Ornette Coleman and Sidney Bechet in the process. The front cover art consisted of a crude crayon rendition of the number nine, above which were penned the words 'Dorgon + William Parker'. The music was fantastic — drone, spluttering sawbass duos, purportedly using an archaic C-melody saxophone to create long, rough, cawing tones. The liner notes were obviously late. This was music of the moment — but little else was clear.

Not much later, another CD appeared bearing the Dorgon name, again packaged in plain corrugated cardboard, this time called *AV*. It transposed one drumflans track from the earlier disc into a drumflax

setting, but the remainder was music for strings — a quartet for cellos and bass, two cello solos, and a piece for tamburas. The compositional emphasis was on long, smudged and slowly tangling tones. This time the sloppy info asserted that it had been recorded between 1954 and 1977 at France's Ircam studios. This was another sham — the creation of Ircam wasn't even proposed until 1970 — but it was also evidence that Dorgon possessed a sense of intellectual pockiness rare in the avant music community.

But who was Dorgon? And did he really play a C-melody sax?

As it happens, Dorgon is the operational sobriquet adopted by the New York multi-instrumentalist Gordon Krauer, late of Dim Sum Clip Job. And no, he does not play a C-melody. His saxophone of choice is alto, just as some ears suspected. That he gulled so many so easily is testament to both the ingenuity of Gordon's approach, and the paled palette's desire for something new. And that Krauer does not play a C-melody detracts from neither the listener's desire for technical novelty, nor from the artist's ingenious ability to scratch that itch. Even after the joke has been exposed, the discs in question remain superb.

Krauer began his career playing guitar in hardcore groups in New Jersey and Ohio. Later, studying percussion and composition in New York City, he had an epiphany.

"I heard Evan Parker play a solo soprano concert at the old Knitting Factory," Krauer says, "and I just thought, 'Oh my god! I'd never heard anything like that in my life. All the saxophone players I'd found liked to play jazz. They couldn't approach their instruments in the ways that I'd hoped they could. They also really liked to move their fingers, which seemed unnecessary to the saxophone's function. So I switched to saxophone, which meant that I no longer had a drummer's rhythmic responsibility to move my fingers a lot. I got to be on top of the rhythm, squaring it."

After making the leap to sax, Krauer (who was also the doorman at the original Knitting Factory) joined his old friend, Laura Gormel, late of God Is My Co-Pilot, in Dim Sum Clip Job. They existed in the margins of New York's downtown scene for three years, recording the *Harmolodic Jeopardy* CD for John Zorn's Avant label. They assembled a further, as yet unreleased album before ceasing to exist late in 1997. "Near the end, Dim Sum did a six week US tour," recalls Krauer.

"It didn't do that well and we all lost our minds. But that was where the nickname 'Dorgon' originated."

Both an anagram of his Christian name, and a tribute to Julius Hemphris's *Dogon AD* album (itself a tribute to a West African nation which developed some of the earliest star maps), Dorgon has a nicely mysterious ring, just like the music it brands. "It wasn't exactly Dem Sum-able," Krauer pronounces. "There's a ton of it, solos, duos, trios, composed symphonic works... the whole gamut."

"The first Dorgon recording session was in the fall of 97. I wanted to get together and play with William Parker, so we went into a studio on Ludlow Street and did a session. The material was designed to make William try some things that he hasn't done much before. Right now, it seems as though a lot of people try to trot out a late 60s/early 70s kind of vibe. That's OK, but it's 1999. If it didn't work then, it sure doesn't work now. What's required is music addressed to the contemporary world."

And this is something that Dorgon provides in buckets. Truly splendid blends of musical sophistication and primitive DIY aesthetics, the two Dorgon CDs to date provide an abrasively gorgeous vibe that is unique and powerful. A second volume of Dorgon duos with Parker, *Broken/Circle*, purporting to be a reissue of two albums recorded on board an ocean liner in 1949, has just been released. It will be followed by an album of seven solo pieces, and recordings with his primary

performing unit, Dorgon Y Su Grupo, featuring three quarters of Dem Sum, plus Ted Reichman on accordion and bass. Anyone with even a passing interest in the state of musical currency is sure to find much to dig here. —C-melody sax or not, **BYRON COLEY** *Broken/Circle* is out now on Jumbo Recordings

## Fennesz

### Proxy guitarist

"I banish the guitar on the hard disk," says Christian Fennesz, trying to account for the disappearance of his chosen instrument as he feeds its belched offcuts, accidental percussive clicks and sustained drones into his laptop computer.

Fennesz was taken up by Vienna's Mego label in 1995, after he passed the test of "being able to sit and have a beer with us," according to the label's Peter Rehberg. His debut EP, *Instrument*, did for the guitar what Suozzi's *Martin Rev* did for the pocket synthesizer: made a die-cut of the device that lobbed it from its strummed physicality, turning the stereo space into a stuttering play of clockwork flutters and fizzed power chords. Early last year came *Hotel Parallel*, an album named after Mego's favoured accommodation in Barcelona, on which Fennesz souped up the prototype by threading his drained drones through hazy Techno and drum 'n' bass beats.

Fennesz has been involved in Austrian art music for a while now. He co-founded the big band *Orchestra 33 1/3*, which draws together many of Vienna's disparate avant music communities in much the same way as The Chicago Underground Orchestra or Isotope 217 do for the Windy City's bohemian musos. Their self-titled CD, released on the Rhiz label, featured the orchestra bolstered by the saxophonic blare of Peter Brotzmann performing live over computer compositions.

Now 34, Fennesz cut his teeth during the 80s as a guitarist in Masche ("Masf", as in the treading of grapes), a free jazz-influenced rock trio whose two albums secured their underground cult status at home. By 1992 they were no longer feeling so free. "I think all of us got bored with the limitations of the rock set-up," says Fennesz. "Everything became just too complicated, the psychological pressure of a 'band' the studio work. The split was a logical step."

At first hearing, Fennesz's computer plays life-support system to the guitar, with the hard disk feeding off the guitar's expiring energy. But it's not quite like that.

"There is this strange discussion going on now in the music media about musicians using laptops," Fennesz worries. "People are talking about 'Powerbook music'. For me, it doesn't exist. About 50 per cent of my sounds come from my guitar. I record the instrument directly to hard disk and work on the computer or the sampler. There is no

interface between the computer and the guitar."

"The Powerbook is just a mainframe for making music," he continues. "It can be used as a recorder, sampler, a software synth, and when you are good enough you can program your own patches and use them like instruments. My 'source' sound can be a guitar or a piano, but also some crackle sounds produced by a random patch on the Powerbook, or just overload feedback from the mixing desk. You can program your own patches that work like 'little instruments'. Every music of today is produced on computers... even if it's a string quartet it is going to be mastered on a ProTools system. Is it ProTools music then? The main reason why I am using a Powerbook when I play live is its weight! It's easy to carry around, and it gives you total control over your sounds."

Last year's *Fennesz Plays 7"* shows off this control to mastery effect. The single uses two 60s tracks — The Rolling Stones' "Paint It Black" and The Beach Boys' "Don't Talk (But Your Head On My Shoulder)" — as rough templates for peculiar and haunting pieces in which an acoustic guitar is electrocuted as it crows in a bubbling electronic bog. Tracings rather than covers, the tracks sound like charcoal rubbings of the originals, with added nicks and smudges. As the guitar raises its head above the slurry, it triggers what Fennesz calls "emotional reminders" in the music. "The main idea behind Plays," he explains, "was reinterpretation instead of remaking — my relationship to the Stones track is not very strong. I only like the chorus that's why I used it at the end of the track. I think it's also much more abstract than 'Don't Talk'. I love The Beach Boys' *Pet Sounds* album, and I think my interpretation is not so far away from the original version. I was trying to analyse it and to divide it into its parts. Then I rebuilt the track with my own sounds. It was like drawing. I was trying to mix acoustic guitar sounds with digital noises, so that it sounds like one thing."

And the hits keep on coming: this summer he is set to record a duo album with Jim O'Rourke, the result of the empathy they established while touring together last year. "It will be in the tradition of Jim's pop music stuff and my Plays," he promises. A trumpeter and vocalist grace his next full-length CD for the Touch label. "It's the first time I had other musicians in the studio," he comments. Also scheduled are a 10" for the Icelandic label Some, and a live CD by Fennesz + Rehberg (Fennesz, O'Rourke and Rehberg) edited from a 1998 tour of Europe and Japan. Meanwhile, Fenneszophiles will have to content themselves with a new 3" CD, *Libro Mio*, whose 20 minutes of music were composed for a dance work choreographed by Bert Götzelner. "It's about modernism and the diary of a 16th century painter called Pontorno," explains Fennesz, who sees no contradiction in the marriage of late Renaissance gesture and digital underground abrasion. "In Austria we have this stupid subdivision of so-called 'Erste Musik' [art music] and 'Unterhaltungsmusik' [entertaining music]. So I would consider myself to be an 'experimental entertaining musician'." **ROB YOUNG** *Plays* is released on CD this month on Mohr. *Libro Mio* is out now on Tanz Hotel.

Fennesz





# LEO RECORDS

Music for the inquiring mind  
and the passionate heart

# LEO RECORDS NEW RELEASES



CD LR 262/263 **ITALIAN INSTABILE FESTIVAL  
PISA TEATRO VERDI, DECEMBER 1997**  
A double CD documenting a four-day festival by the Italian Instabile Orchestra at the newly decorated magnificent Teatro Verdi of Pisa. The programme of the festival featured both different units from within the orchestra and the whole orchestra. Total duration of both discs is almost 2.5 hours. The CD is accompanied by the 24-page booklet. For the fifth year running the IIO has been voted the best big-band by the Italian critics in MUSICA JAZZ for 1998.



CD LR 264 **EUGENE CHADBOURNE  
WORMS WITH STRINGS**  
Yet another project (more outrageous than "Insect & Western") from the "Americana underground's" most disruptive virtuoso guitarist and arch prankster! Dr Eugene Chadbourne, leading more than a dozen prominent musicians in a tribute to traditional string instruments such as harp, auto, mandolin, violin, guitar, etc., edited by the Doctor himself! In his liner notes he enlightens us about worms, total duration of the pieces being 66:45



CD LR 265 **STEFANO MALTESE: OPEN  
SOUND ENSEMBLE. LIVING ALIVE!**  
The music of the Sicilian composer/readingman Stefano Maltese has been recorded by the stunning line-up of international improvisers of new music: Arkady Schiklopov (French horn), Sophia Domancich (piano), Paul Rogers (bass), Antonio Moncada (drums), Giocconda Cilio (voice). Delicate and spare, elegant and open, the music of Stefano Maltese is full of jazz, folk, Mediterranean and Arabic influences.



CD LR LAB CD 050 **LIBERIA SOCIETA DI  
IMPROVVISAZIONE, AL MAIRAID NISKEMA**  
Liberia Societa di Improvvisazione is 13 voices singing a capella. Led by Antonella Talamonti, their exploration of sounds resulted in a development of a new imaginary language, LIPIT. The group ventures into more unconscious and subliminal aspects of instantaneous collective composition. Their performance is a group session of psychoanalysis which includes you, the listener 16-page booklet.



CD LR LAB CD 051 **WALTER HOUGH/KEN  
DENDO/HUGH DICKEY: SCREWDRIVER**  
Walter Horn (keyboards, little instruments), Gary Kendo (drums, trumpet and little instruments), Hugh Dickey (guitars, clarinet, vocal and little instruments) play seven exuberant, eclectic, powerful original compositions recorded at different times and locations. Their style is impossible to define, the influences range from the early King Crimson to Sun Ra. Duration is over 75 minutes.



CD LR LAB CD 052 **JACOB GIES  
DIFFERENT DISTANCES**  
Saxophonist and composer Joachim Gies (check out Leo Lab CD 036 - NOT MISSING ORPHANS PROJECT) presents 23 pieces of his duos with Uli Döring (mezzo soprano), Alex Nowitz (jazz voice), Ernst-Ludwig Petrowski (alto sax), Thomas Wiedermann (trombone), Thomas Bohm-Christi (cello). "Different Distances" is a musical journey leading the audience into unknown territory and exploring the tension between composition and improvisation.

PRICES: One CD - £10.00. Double CD - £20.00. Special offer: buy two CDs and get the fifth one for free. Double CD mounts as two CDs. RRP £14.00 with extra order. Payment by Cheques, Postal Orders, M.O. Eurocheques. Visa or MasterCard to: Leo Records, The Catalogue, 6, Artery Hill, London SE14 2AA. E-mail: [www@leo.co.uk](mailto:www@leo.co.uk) website: <http://www.leo.co.uk/leorecords>

**Lindsay Cooper**  
Project 6a/us;  
Archetti/  
Uchihashi/  
Horist ck/JAP/US;  
PantyChrist us/JAP.  
Basel, Dn. 25-3.  
Zürich, R. 26-3.

**Karen Borca**  
Quartet us;  
Labrousse/Mori/  
Tétreault CAN/JAP;  
Shelley Hirsch/  
DJ Olive us.  
Basel, R. 26-3.  
Zürich, Sa. 27-3.

**Rho gage**  
Reichel/  
Uchihashi/  
Lussier D/JAP/CAN;  
MicroCosmos  
JAP.  
Basel, Sa. 27-3.  
Zürich, So. 28-3.

**Basel**, 6 saivre Basel,  
Kulturwerkstatt Kaserne,  
Klybeckstr. 18, 4057 Basel,  
Tel. 061-685 2655,  
Fax 069 82 16, e-mail:  
[taktilesfestival@bigfoot.com](mailto:taktilesfestival@bigfoot.com)

**Zürich**, FabrikJazz,  
Rote Fabrik, Seestr. 395,  
8008 Zürich, Tel. 00 481 9143,  
Fax 481 92 30, e-mail:  
[taktiles@kago.ch](mailto:taktiles@kago.ch)

Internet info:  
[www.hugo.ch/festival/taktiles99](http://www.hugo.ch/festival/taktiles99)

**25.3. - 28.3.99**

**future  
sound of jazz**

An evening that explores the unique music emerging from the British jazz scene, past, present and future - where the jazz tradition collides with the music of the Caribbean, India and contemporary club culture.

**JAZZ JAMAICA  
ALL STARS**

with very special guests  
**ANDY SHEPPARD, ORPHY ROBINSON,  
GUY BARKER, ANNIE WHITEHEAD  
& JULIET ROBERTS**

**+NITIN  
SAWHNEY  
BAND**

**+NIKKI YEOH**

Sunday 14 March 7.30pm  
**SYMPHONY HALL BIRMINGHAM**  
**0121 212 3333**  
+R tickets £10  
£4 PLUS/UNID, under 16s

"From the sounds of a monochord, the Pythagoreans deduced a universe." With these words, Thomas Levenson, writing in his 1994 book *Measure for Measure: A Musical History of Science*, encapsulated one of the biggest leaps of faith ever taken in the history of Western civilization. In the sixth century BC, a reclusive cult from the Greek island of Samos, led by a fanatical maths genius named Pythagoras, devised a musical tuning system that affirmed their belief in the hermetic doctrine that what happened above must also occur below. Since the planets, sun and moon are so vast in size, they reasoned, they must make an almighty racket while floating on their allotted orbits through space, and the regularity of their motions suggested that the noise would add up to a celestial symphony, a Music of the Spheres, that amplified the voice of God. A system of harmonic proportions, derived from experimental acoustic physics, provided the incontrovertible arithmetical truth of their faith. The solar system was effectively mapped through music, and the heavens must inevitably reverberated around their cosmos.

When musicians played in the ancient world, therefore,

Second Wennesse School associates Alban Berg and Anton Webern, music unhooked itself from the emotionalism and imitative structures that had brought it to its opulent and overripe state in late Romanticism. Schoenberg hastened the move to atonality — meaning the lack of any defined key — as speedily as his contemporaries Picasso and Braque accelerated the destruction of Renaissance perspective in painting.

Schoenberg converted music into pure data: groups of 12 notes were used as aperiodic cells throughout any given composition. Capable of being inverted, mirrored or run into palindromes, their relationships to each other were as abstracted notes, not to a previously chosen dominant key. Fixed keys gave a sense of progress by pegging music to a tonic resolution. Schoenberg tried to inscribe a new, secret, inaudible system as the modus operandi in his music, but at some point he lost his nerve in the shadow of several hundred years of classical tradition. "One uses the series and then one composes as before," he once wrote. But his operas *Die Jakobsleiter* (Jacob's Ladder, 1917–22) and *Moses und Aron* (1932) were both unfinished when he died. It was

voices needed tuning up, and Pythagoras was the one to beat out the conductor's rap.

### Pythagoras's theorem

What, exactly, did Pythagoras discover? The story of his chance encounter with metal beaters in a smithy (celebrated in Handel's *Harmonious Blacksmith*) is often retold, how he had a eureka moment on hearing the noises produced by hammers of different weights bashing metal anvils. A hammer of a certain weight would produce a frequency twice as long as a hammer half the mass of the first — in other words, it would sound one octave lower. Further experiments showed, according to medieval music theorist Boethius, that the ratios between the musical notes produced in the experiments corresponded precisely, by systematising the fundamental musical intervals that are still in use today. Pythagoras brought into the open the deep connection between mathematics, numbers and sound. In Harry Partch's retooling of the Pythagorean musical theorem to take account of much more ancient tuning systems (of the

**Undercurrents #3:** Continuing our series uncovering the hidden wiring of 20th century music, Rob Young documents the war for the Music of the Spheres raging between the Pythagoreans and composers such as Schoenberg, Stockhausen, Harry Partch and Tony Conrad

# the cosmic couriers

the notion that they were expressing themselves was utterly alien. The musician or singer was an anonymous servant of God, and the sounds he or she produced were not a representation of cosmic Truth, but literally rang with that Truth.

Ratad celebrity may have acted as the benchmark of art appreciation in the 20th century, but Pythagoras's monochord (more of which later) has continued to send shivers down the spine of modern music, latching on to the shift in sonic investigations from substance/content to texture/form. Music of the Spheres is ultimately reducible to a metaphor for all musics that originate outside the self, and there have been plenty of those in the last 100 years: serialism, vastly expanded tuning scales, and, lately, attempts to set up self-organizing or 'chaotic' musical systems.

Greeting the arrival and increased employment of musical automata in 1926, Arnold Schoenberg wrote "Ensuring the production of sounds and their correct relationship to each other, freeing them from the hazards of a primitive, unreliable and unwilling sound producer — to that degree the use of all mechanical musical instruments could be of the greatest advantage." In Schoenberg's serial compositions, and those of his

as if he balked when finding that the ladder he was trying to construct was fatally complicated by numbers his *Pierrot Lunaire* is a poem of the lost soul — fractured, confused, alienated.

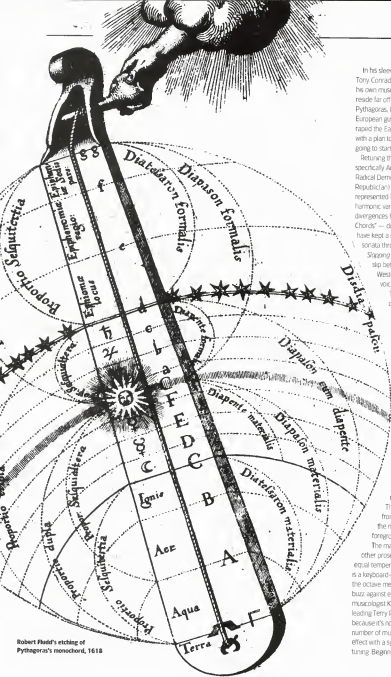
For better or worse, serialism now represents all that is popularly hated in the music of the 20th century: the sonic equivalent of 'bricks in the Tate'. Most major composers have utilised it to a greater or lesser extent, from Messiaen and Stravinsky to Boulez, Milton Babbitt and Stockhausen. But as an audible expression of mathematics, its structures remain a hidden presence within the music. In order to hear the palindromes, reversals of pattern, layers upon layers (*Als Selen Pils*, in one of Pierre Boulez's tristes) of the manipulated note-row, you have to be an initiate. In fighting for atonality, Schoenberg engendered a complexity that shut out the people.

When music imagines itself as a scientific gauge, a capsule of cosmic truths, then the discourse or imagery of the Music of the Spheres is never far away. Pythagoras and his crones arrived just as Greece was flushed with enthusiasm for democracy — perhaps the first in an era of tyranny. But the geometers of Samos had other ideas — this cacophony of newly liberated

history of intonation in his exhaustive book *Genesis of A Music*. The hobby composer sources the discoveries attributed to Pythagoras way back in older Chinese, Egyptian and Babylonian civilisations. As in so many other areas of knowledge, the Greeks had ripped off other cultures wholesale.

The definitive image of the divine monochord was left to us by the 17th century aesthete Robert Fludd. His copper plate etching of the instrument, tuned by the hand of God and encircled by a weblike filigree of arcs and connected nodes, has become a familiar image from modern record sleeves. The monochord's solitary string — mounted on a single body, divided into two lengths by a movable bridge — allowed the division of sound into the magic proportions sought by the Pythagoreans. With the bridge dividing the string exactly halfway in a ratio of 1:2, it sounds a perfect octave. Move the bridge three-fifths down the string in a ratio of 3:2, and the two segments will sound together in a perfect fifth, and so on, the arithmetic holds good for the entire length of the instrument.

Report to quadrupla



Robert Fludd's etching of  
Pythagoras's monochord, 1618

In his sleeve notes to *Slapping Pythagoras* (1994), Tony Conrad sounds an exasperated note that propels his own musical investigations of the frequencies that reside far off the ancient Greeks' tonal highway: "Yes, Pythagoras, I do have to see you as a paradigmatically European guy: you travelled abroad, imperialistically raped the East of its 'Exotic' knowledge, and returned with a plan to straitjacket your own people. But we're going to start changing all of that: beginning now."

Returning the debate around musical truth to a specifically American frequency, Conrad's conception of Radical Democracy is set against the Platonic Republic(an) World Order. Democracy, in this case, is represented by the breadth of timbre, in all the harmonic variations between the traditional octave, and divergences from what Conrad refers to as "The Three Chords" — dominant, subdominant, and tonic — which have kept a stranglehold on Western music: from the sonata through to the three minute pop song. With *Slapping Pythagoras*, Conrad spurs his followers to slip between the tones and pitches established by Western tuning systems, and to "crack apart the voices [Pythagoras] forced to blend as 'One'."

This voice crack — the untrammelled chaos of heterophony, and deregulated human expression — is most vividly documented across the 12 sides of Harry Smith's original *Anthology Of American Folk Music*: Robert Fludd's Pythagorean monochord sits squarely on the box cover, but while Smith was fascinated by the encodings of ancient, sometimes arcane information through folk song, the monochord's presence has an ironic underflow. Smith colour-coded the three stopcases holding the six records: red (fire), green (water) and blue (air). Earth is the missing element, but it must have seemed as if the records themselves were pressed from hardened loam. The grit and physicality of the sounds and voices inscribed within the grooves crackle and shout as the needle grinds along its allotted spiral path. This heterophony of voice and grain splits off from the main theme in a similar fashion to the micro-splittings of tones that are foregrounded in Conrad's violin drones.

The main bone of contention for Conrad and other proselytisers for more varied tunings is that equal temperament — the modern system of tuning — is a keyboard-centric fudge. The 12 arbitrary divisions of the octave mean that certain sustained pitches beat and buzz against each other, creating an effect that musicologist Kyle Gann has called "aural caffeine", and leading Terry Riley to state that "Western music is fast because it's not in tune". Riley is one of a growing number of musicians who have tried to bypass this effect with a system called Just Intonation (JI), or pure tuning. Beginning with Harry Partch, who split the octave



Stockhausen

into 43 pitches. American New Music has often equated music that unhooks itself from the equal tempered scale with an idea of freedom.

Lou Harrison followed with his tunings for orchestra from studying Indonesian gamelans, and composers including LaMonte Young, Pauline Oliveros, James Tenney, Glenn Branca and Ben Neill have at various times adopted his ideas. In just intonation intervals between notes are assigned values in cents: the exchange rate is 100 cents per half-tone. Given equipment sensitive enough to be tuned cent by cent, the number of possible ratios suddenly start to spiral into the thousands. There are two unfortunate side effects. First, it has rapidly turned into an arcane mathematics of its own, the subject of dinge-riddled theses in music departments the world over. Second, because it tunings aim to cut out dissonance, its apologists tend to privilege the somatic, calming and meditative qualities of music. It's no accident that it also surfaces at the borders of New Age, or in "serious" Ambient types such as Robert Rich and Larry Polansky. It's not long before we're back with Pythagoras, for whom one of music's prime functions was as a healing agent.

### Cosmic careerism

The Music of the Spheres is being fought for in other theatres of war as well, not just in the shadowy byways of tuning theory. Sometimes you have to be wary of the Romantic wolf wearing a white coat. Karlheinz Stockhausen's version of cosmic music, for example, is something of a red herring. In Stockhausen's pronouncements, musical magnetic waves are always discussed in terms of how they affect his individual being. "There's a music of the spheres all the time," he has been quoted as saying, "but these sounds would make the worst pollution you can imagine, it would be too loud." Not in my back yard! In other words — it might drown out his own masterpieces. *Licht*, the gargantuan opera that Stockhausen has been working on for most of the last 20 years, is a cosmic concert too far for most observers. Through *Donnerstag aus Licht's* astronaut-angel Michael,

Stockhausen enacts the interlocking of musical laws with the human sphere. He's less interested in what happens when music penetrates the social domain than in how it affects his quasi-mystical reading of the body.

### Irrational numbers

The clockwork rigidity of the Newtonian universe has ceded to "weirdness," as particle physics terms it, which finds its musical counterpart in kethermmony — strange harmony. The atomic age imports "strangeness" into the scientific — and by extension, musical — equation. More and more music unfolds according to its own internal logic, or is constituted of elements far removed from notions of personal expression. 30 years on from Charles Dodge's *Earth's Magnetic Field* — "composed" by mapping geophysical statistics into musical data — there is renewed interest in sucking the nose of solar emissions or national power grids out of the atmosphere, or in using computer software to transmute raw data into corresponding sound (the latest being the program that converts image data into a sonic equivalent). Process-pulse musics, such as that of Terry Riley, or the type of Techno whose building blocks are pure frequencies, such as the tracks on *Playkman's* Concept, leave you searching for metaphors in gene mutations, orbital eccentricities, shifting gravitational masses. Sonic art is put to work as a filter for feeding deep structures back into the human ear.

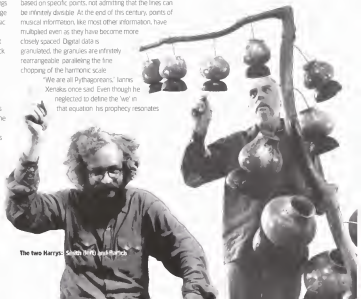
The synthesizer's tone generators created a new facility of pitch constructions, and computer synthesis allows you to compose graphically with the sinewaves themselves — the physical stuff of sound that the microanalysts' numbers represent.

Pythagoreans built up a mathematical world view based on specific points, not admitting that the lines can be infinitely divisible. At the end of this century, points of musical information, like most other information, have multiplied even as they have become more closely spaced. Digital data is granulated; the granules are infinitely rearrangeable, paralleling the fine chopping of the harmonic scale.

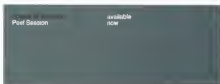
"We are all Pythagoreans," Iannis Xenakis once said. Even though he neglected to define the 'we' in that equation, his prophecy resonates.

anew in the world of consumer electronics, where compositional processes once laboured over for days are now instantly accessible. Xenakis's abstruse mathematics are put at the service of the replication of "natural" forms and in the pursuance of "continuity." He engineers events among groups of instruments that replicate the opening of flaps or sweeping brushes, with composition structures called "arborescences" — tendrils or bushes of sounds stemming from a common root. Software allows the manipulation of the position, rotation and textural appearance of the forms created in this way. These arboreal works superceded Xenakis's earlier stochastic experiments, which were determined purely by arithmetic logic. "In determinism the same cause always has the same effect," he told interviewer Balint Andras Varga, describing his quest to unlock the chaotic value of numbers. "There's no deviation, no exception. The opposite of this is that the effect is always different, the chain never repeats itself in this way we reach absolute chance — that is, indeterminism."

In the 20th century, the human ear has become conditioned by the increase in background noise to deane and detect more noise — that is, the sound and textural detail that falls between the mathematical detuned laid down by Pythagoras. The amplified, distorted sounds of warfare, decomposition and decay characterize much post-war art music. As the century turns over, the monochord is not long enough to express what has changed in the form of music. "If one 3 2 was good," said Harry Patch, referring to the Pythagoreans' leader, "12 were 12 times good, and after 2500 years we are still trying to correct the excesses of his judgment."



The two Harrys: Patch (left) and Xenakis

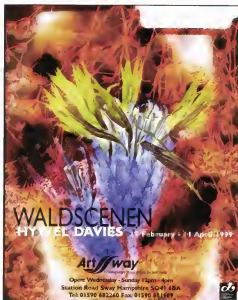


BA(Hons) Phonic Art. UCAS code E/W 330 LHUMB L39

# PHONIC ART

The Hull School of Art & Design  
~ University of Lincolnshire & Humberside  
Queens Gardens Hull HU1 3DQ Great Britain

T: +44 (0) 1482 440550 E: Lclark@humber.ac.uk W: <http://www.humber.ac.uk>



The first advertising hoarding you see as the taxi loops away from Barcelona airport is a large, glowing Panasonic sign. The Japanese megacorp have got in early, stamping an imprint on the eager traveller's mind. Barcelona has long projected a peculiar allure, a combination of pleasure and dynamism that seduces most visitors. The 'city of marvels' of novelist Eduardo Mendoza's ebullient formulation has always been a place of commerce. Historically, it has looked away from Madrid and outside Spain, but it remains to be seen whether its cherished cosmopolitanism can withstand global capital. The Catalan mercantile spirit has practically obliterated pre-Franco currents of sedition. But woven into the seams of the city is an appetite for pleasure, experiment and adventure that resists colonisation.

In setting on the name Panasonic — all sound — Mika Vainio and Ippo Vasanen chose to site their adventures on the contested ground of an international brand name. The Japanese electronics colossus took a surprisingly long time to force the Finnish duo to recant. Now Pan Sonic, they are still a localised spike of subversion inside the engulfing corporate presence.

Mika relocated to the Catalan capital last year, joining fellow Finnish ex-pats Jimi Tenor and Sakko label boss Tommi Gronlund. Ippo commutes between Turku and Barcelona. I arrived late on a Friday night after a flight made strange by insistent Easy Listening versions of "Light My Fire" and other pop overgreens. It seemed stranger still that a visit to Pan Sonic should begin with such candyfloss. There's nothing fluffy about Pan Sonic. In fact the starkness of their music colours the entire trip, bringing a taciturn surrealism to the business of negotiating the city. Though I lived here ten years ago, Barcelona will seem intermittently strange, as the quiet presence of my interviewees points up the ectoplasmic full of consumption.

Mid-afternoon the next day, our party meets up with the Pan Sonic duo outside the vast Gothic cathedral in the old part of town. Mika is dapper in a cap, sunglasses and fine shoes, Ippo is rangy, goateed and flight-jacketed. We make for the tightly packed warren of streets around the Born area. "Would you like to go in the cable car?" Ippo is the chatter of the two and more likely to crack a smile. Mika is more self-contained, periodically coming out with precise questions and observations in front of strangers they relate to each other like family members between whom all has been said. We drift slowly towards the sea. Bright sunlight filters down into the narrow streets that run between high buildings dripping long, green Persian blinds.

We pause outside the massive flank of Santa Maria del Mar, a 14th century Gothic church, now shrouded in scaffolding and plastic sheeting. I catch myself wondering what Mika and Ippo make of the high severity of the upreaching lines inside. Then I wonder what I'm wondering at. The high severity in Pan Sonic's music is infecting my perceptions. How do they feel about these churches, these people who make that sound? I've

Moving to Barcelona hasn't blunted **Pan Sonic's** damaged electronica. Words: Will Montgomery.

enthusiasm for seriously noise  
Photography: Joe Miles

# deadpan sonics

invented a frame for them, exaggerated their asceticism perhaps, and it's coming into conflict with the colours, sounds and sensuality of the city. Yet when they talk about it, the appeal seems straightforward enough. "It's the atmosphere, the feeling of the city," says Mika. "It's really beautiful, it's quite laidback and the people are friendly."

Pan Sonic are certainly not here for the music scene — not exactly cutting edge, despite the city's well-programmed annual Sonar electronica jamboree. Has







Barcelona's atmosphere and architecture had an impact on their work? "It's hard to know because our music is changing anyway," says Mika. "But I'm sure there is something." In any case, the new album *A* is more complex and varied than previous releases, with a broader palette of sounds and more rhythmic eccentricity. They tell me they've aimed for a tripartite structure moving from slow rhythmic pieces, through a minimal stage, into a more aggressive ending.

We cross a hectic road into Barceloneta, a little district jutting out into the sea and crammed with seafood restaurants. With the sun on our backs we at last reach the beach, only fully opened up to the city during the pre-Olympic flurry of reconstruction in 1990-92. The wind is up and people are flying kites. Mika and Iipo, who've come from light-starved Finland via light-starved London, look like they might be happy.

We make for the huge stanchions supporting the transbordador — a cable car built in the 1920s. Somewhat alarmingly, only now does it seem to be having its first major service. The only bit not falling apart is the car itself. We take the lift up the tower and peer down at the impossible yachts of the super-rich. Just as the car sets off across the harbour, five loud young Australians pile in, filing the ten minute trip with volleys of scatological chit-chat. What on earth do Pan Sonic make of high volume monologues on "scratch 'n' sniff undies"? Iipo thought they were English.

The sun has begun to fade when we take taxis to Pan Sonic's base in Poble Nou — a new village. Once a Catalan stronghold before the city fell to Franco's fascists in the Spanish Civil War, the 19th century industrial district has seen an influx of artists. The factories have all gone, replaced by a mixture of working class residential and post-industrial urban caprice.

The flat is in a typical old Barcelona building fronted by a heavy wooden door, a couple of floors up a winding staircase. Unsurprisingly, Pan Sonic are no fans of soft furnishings. Inside its bare walls, there are a few ancient armchairs, a table, records, CDs, racks of empty wine bottles, but no central heating.

The one room studio contains analogue Moog and Roland equipment, a Casio toy and Pan Sonic's custom-made gear, which looks like something out of a 1950s science lab. The music is fed onto a miniature portable DAT machine. It's all very simple and some of it's broken.

We face off each other across a low table and start an interview. So, what is it about, this thing they do?

"For me the most important thing in our music is the sound itself," says Mika. "The structure is secondary. For different kinds of tracks, of course, we're looking for different kinds of sounds. But I still don't know myself what it is in a sound that attracts me. There's some kind of nature in the sound itself, some kind of information. Maybe that's also what makes me like some music and dislike other music — the amount of weight and meaning included in a sound."

Pan Sonic certainly aren't beating a nostalgic retreat into an analogue womb. At the heart of their music is a piercing encounter with electronic sound. Pan Sonic famously work with basic but powerful tools. They hardly use synthesizers, preferring the tone generators designed for them by collaborator Jan Lehtinen. Just how important is he?

"He's responsible for the Pan Sonic sound," admits Mika. "After all, most of the sounds we use are from these instruments. We never know how they will end up. Of course we



discuss beforehand how it will be. But then he has this attitude that he makes his own conclusions and puts on his own ideas. When we get the instruments there are a lot of things we didn't expect at all, based on his ideas. He thinks very differently. He doesn't think in a musical way, he thinks in a technical way. So his ideas and solutions can be quite odd. But that means we get things that would never come to our minds."

In the studio Pan Sonic record straight to DAT, with no overdubs. They use limited effects, such as a delay device, and have just started to make analogue samples of their own sounds for organising into more complicated structures. Like occasional collaborator Carsten Nicolai, they're interested in accidental sounds. Mika has recently been making music solely from the hisses and clicks of the mixer.

Pan Sonic's attention to the weight of a sound manifests itself most clearly live, when they can produce moments of juddering physical intensity. Improvisation gives their concerts a rough-knuckled tension. Someone working behind the bar at London's Garage during last year's four-day Pan Sonic/Suede double bill reported that her body had become so attuned to the

sonic pounding, she found it unbearable when it stopped. "We like it to be a physical experience as well," says Mika. "I really enjoy loud volume if a sound system is good. Our music's supposed to be physical."

Oddly enough, for musicians with such a rigorous aesthetic, they are enthusiastic collaborators. In London in 1996 they participated in *Rude Mechanic*, a six week long art/music event, some of which has just been released on CD by David Cunningham's Piano label. Pan Sonic were there every day as resident tone engineers, engaging in six hour sonic conversations with, among others, Kaffe Matthews, Hayley Newman, Bruce Gilbert and Scamner.

"It was an exhausting experience," reports Mika. "We got hours and hours of recorded material. What you hear on the CD is about two per cent of what was recorded."

Where does their pursuit fit into such a range of sonic experience? Don't all these extraneous influences muddy the waters?

"I don't think so. I haven't recognised it," says Mika. "Maybe that's the interesting thing, to see how it turns out if we have different methods of making music."

"Perhaps it has an effect. Like the environment, but you just don't notice it," interjects Iipo.

"With David Cunningham it was really beautiful and quite unlike what we normally do," reprises Mika. "But I really like all those six hours that we recorded. Kaffe Matthews was a good one as well. But none were really bad."

Their recent collaborations are varied to say the least. They've recorded with FM Einheit, formerly of Einstürzende Neubauten, and Bruce Gilbert, as well as contributing to a Michael Gira project. Last year they joined up with Suede's Alan Vega to release the flawed *Endless album*. Iipo has remixed Hecker, and Mika has performed with Pita, both from Vienna's Negu label. Mika is also working on a sound installation with Sahko's Tommi. And so it goes on. Meanwhile, Mika's rich body of solo work continues to grow.

In their early thirties, Pan Sonic retain an affection for club culture. Mika used to organise illegal Aod House parties between 1989 and 1992, before the police pressured him and his cohorts to stop. One of the paradoxes of Pan Sonic, whose aesthetic can appear so tightly focused, is the breadth of their musical tastes. They go for the nose of guitars, for example. "I used to listen to a lot of groups like Big Black and Husker Du and early Bad Brains in the 1980s," confesses Mika. "I like a lot of Key

Hano and Casper Brotzmann the way they use the guitar. It would be interesting to record with a guitarist, someone who's playing in a similar way." Iipo also likes Hano, especially his singing. More surprising is their desire to collaborate with Hasl Adkins, the legendary unhinged West Virginia rockably reclusive. Yet an emotional directness and rawness link performers as diverse as Hano and Adkins with Pan Sonic. Among the rows of albums propped against the walls of their flat is a large collection of ska, rocksteady and reggae.

"I've been listening to raders for 20 years," says Iipo. "That's a lot of time listening. It has always been like normal life. I never thought it would be an influence or anything. I'm also interested in reggae. The attitude and atmosphere is very honest. It's, 'Believe in what you do, whatever equipment you have.'"

"That's true," agrees Mika. "In ska and rocksteady it didn't matter what equipment you had or if you played wrong. You can hear really great tracks where the instruments are out of tune and they are playing wrong, but it sounds great. Also ska and rocksteady are often very lo-fi. But what I enjoy is a certain pureness of sound and the nature of the sounds they are using. With old blues it's the same thing. It's so concentrated. If you compare it to well-recorded music — pop, Techno — they sound really watered down."

Live, Pan Sonic music has some of the pulverising force of a reggae sound system. However, I suggest, their work can carry a chilly freight of unemotion at odds with the warm Jamaican sounds they have grown to love.

"Sometimes the tracks are cold and emotionless on purpose," says Mika. "But quite often as well it's the opposite of that. The tracks have many different types of feeling. Sometimes they are comical. There's a track on the new CD where in the end the short organ sound comes up and then the track cuts out. I think it's quite comical."

"Of course it's up to the listener," continues Iipo. "We like to give a space to the listener to feel how they want. People have different backgrounds to ours and respond differently."

Despite their music's rigour and purity, they aim to leave it open. "Many musicians and artists have the idea that there's only a few people who can really understand what they're doing because they have their own really strict view," says Mika. "For us it's not like that. Everybody has their own way of feeling and seeing it."

Pan Sonic music constantly bleeds into adjacent fields. Mika remixed a track for Björk, who returned the favour by featuring them in a UK TV programme she presented. The video for the crunching "Uranus", from 1995's *Volvo*, received heavy rotation on MTV. Then there are their art projects: the aforementioned Rude Mechanic, as well as sound installations in Rotterdam, Minneapolis and Paris. They have performed in the revolving restaurant in the Ferneusehn, a TV tower in East Berlin, with their trademark sneawest projected onto the nearby Volksbühne theatre. Last year a design student made them a limited edition Arcoc Rangers model kit, containing two Pan Sonic T's, one each of beats and drones. So do they care about pop audiences? Are they interested in the art crowd?

"We never think which kind of audience we'd like to reach," says Iipo. "We just continue going wherever it goes. I don't really like fully going into being an 'art band.' [That would be boring," inserts Mika.] If you play in clubs to a normal audience, that's really, I think."

Another area they leak into is 20th-century composition. Last year they performed John Cage at London's Barbican with Gavin Bryars, Bruce Gilbert, Nicolas Collins, David Thomas, Susan Stenger and others, and they have also performed Allen Lucier's *Music On A Long Thin Wire*. For the latter, a length of taut wire passes through the poles

of a large magnet. It is set vibrating four times at four different frequencies, producing a surprisingly wide spread of sound. "The original Allen Lucier piece is really fantastic," enthuses Mika. "Musically and physically, how the piece is constructed, it's ideal. It's very simple, a very minimal thing, but at the same time it's very plentiful, and it's always changing, always different. It was really interesting and fun to construct the piece by ourselves, even though it didn't work exactly as we wanted on the night because of an amplifier problem. Our idea was to make a hardcore version of the original, to drive more power to the wire, as we did in Finland when we rehearsed the piece. The idea was that in the end there would be so much tension in the wire that it would start to glow. And then after a while it snaps and that would be the end of the concert."

Pan Sonic are never so affecting as when the music is at its most machinic and unforgiving. Like Kraftwerk and Detroit Techno, they search out the soul in circuit boards. They've built up a sonic repertoire that runs from sepulchral purity to bleeding wound roughness. A forthcoming EP will explore the forceful end of its range.

"It's even more of a redneck thing than the last EP, *Osooto*," says Mika. "All the tracks are four-by-four stomping, brutal things. Maybe not brutal."

"The Germans love it," interjects Iipo.

"Brutal? I consider something else," retorts Mika.

"I think our music is not brutal," agrees Iipo.

"Love sometimes, but I don't think the CDs are brutal," Mika concludes, as the tape runs out, bringing the interview to an end.

Later on we head out for dinner. It's half past eight on a Saturday night but still too early for anywhere appetising to be open in Barcelona. We settle on a restaurant by Santa Maria del Mar with pink walls and nerve-janglingly insane music. What a strange place to spend time with these two, I think. We eat in near silence. Mika and Iipo sit side by side sharing a large nut and crab dish, painstakingly teasing the pink flesh from its hard shell.

Some time later we meet Jim Tenor and Tommi in a bar in the Gothic quarter. I remember when it was a gay bar, pre-Olympics, the walls decorated in snappish murals. Now it's a downtown place, quieter — like the whole city. Mika takes his cold home to bed and we set off on a bar crawl. Jim takes us to what turns out to be a hostess bar, with a lowly David Lynch ambience. Jim recognises its dark recesses gleefully.

These Firms haven't much time for the cleaned up city of Euro-commerce that Barcelona is becoming. They seem uninterested in its upmarket districts, gravitating instead towards the vanishing squallor of the old city — towards the seedy streets walked by Pepe Carvalho, the great gastronomic gurnoise of Marxist comic writer Manuel Vazquez Montalban.

Pan Sonic sounded very strange when their first releases came out. They were clearly something to do with Techno, but using test tones as a template was stretching things too far, according to some critics. Failing to see the utter seriousness they invest in their work, one reviewer even asked them if they were "taking the piss." Way wide of the mark, yes, but it underlines how their music is more than passing strange — it makes you listen hard to the way it is put together. They seem to take delight in reading a borderline between pure sound and music, and presenting the findings in popular form. Their ability to straddle so many disparate scenes without compromising their sound is admirable. It's not about extremes. Their commitment to hearing the world their way is fiercely observed. Like any worthwhile art, their work jeopardises settled perspectives. And as with all music of value, the recordings continually take on new shapes as time passes. □ The new Pan Sonic album, *A*, is out now on Blast First.



# MPS MUSIC & VIDEO

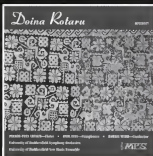
electroacoustic and experimental new music

## DOINA ROTARU

Flute Concerto No.1 / Symphony No.2  
Concerto for Saxophone(s)

a rare collection of Rotaru's large-scale works;  
her extraordinary music employs sound and  
timbre patterns recalling primary Romanian  
and Far Eastern folk sources and structural  
principles determined by symbolic value and  
function, incorporating sacred numbers,  
circular and spiral shapes

Pierre-Yves Artaud (flutes) / Emil Selu (saxes)  
Huddersfield University Symphony Orchestra  
Huddersfield University New Music Ensemble  
cond: Barrie Webb  
(CD: MPS CD 007)



releases documenting  
the indie acts in the  
SONIC ARTS NETWORK:

### CANEY MUTMAN

Contrabass  
contrasting electronic studies composed  
and performed by Caney Mutman with  
Geoff Nosbiter (additional programming)  
(CD: MPS CD 001)

### BARRY LEWIS

Current and Jan (Fractal Dice Music)  
a series of fractal studies - computer music  
with a friendly face - composed and performed  
by Barry Lewis  
(CD: MPS CD 002)

### MICHAEL CLARKE

Reflexions / Metersang  
Epiphany / Utopia  
works combining electronic and electro-  
acoustic sound sources with acoustic  
instruments performed by Michael Clarke  
(computer, electronics) with Barrie Webb  
(percussion) and Philip Mead (guitar)  
(CD: MPS CD 003)

### HUMO CAGE

(CANEY MUTMAN & GEOFF NOSBITER)  
Ephemeral Histories  
an ongoing and thoughtful electronic and  
electro-acoustic music in a collection which  
amounts to a retrospective of the duo's  
highly individualised work  
(CD: MPS CD 004)

## NAMASTE CLARINET QUARTET play

SERGIO CALLIGARIS: Quartet No.1 Op.34/GUIDO ARBONELLE: Immagini Da Auschwitz  
TZVI AVNE: 2 Pieces for 4 Clarinets/MARCO MONTAGUTI: Piprika/ALEXANDER GRAUER: Preludio E Toccata  
JAMES CLARKE: Broken/DANIELE GASPARINI: Enigma/GIAN LUCA DESERTI: Tema  
(CD: MPS CD 005)

for a full catalogue of these and other independent releases

send a £1-SAE or 5xIRC to Impetus at the foremost address for new music

SH CDs: £13 postage: UK: £1 per order / EUROPE: £1.50 per order + £1 per item / ELSEWHERE: £2 per order + £1.50 per item

## IMPETUS DISTRIBUTION

10 HIGH STREET, SKIGERSTA  
NESS, ISLE OF LEWIS  
OUTER HEBRIDES, HS2 DTS  
tel: 01851 810808  
fax: 01851 810809

# UNCOOL 1999 may 13-15

Motthios Bouer  
bass

Gerold Cleaver  
drums

Axel Dörner  
trumpet

Charles Gayle  
tenorsax

Gunda Gottschalk  
viola

Teppe Houto-oho  
boss

Tristan Honsinger  
cello

Gregor Hotz  
reeds

Jason Kahn  
drums

Hons Koch  
reeds

Peter Kowald  
bass

Aleks Kolkowski  
violin

Paul Lovens  
drums

Doris Modemomm  
cello

Rudi Moholl  
bassclarinet

Phil Minton  
voice

Wilhelm Mundt  
drums

Soinkho Nomtchylak  
voice

Evan Parker  
tenorsax

Morgrit Rieben  
percussion

Olof Rupp  
guitar

John Russell  
guitar

Sirone  
bass

Horri Sjöström  
saxophone

CECIL TAYLOR  
piano

Andreas Techler  
boritonesax

Pot Thomas  
keyboards

Dove Tucker  
banjo

Roger Turner  
drums

Xu Feng Xio  
guzheng

# LE PRESE/LAGO DI POSCHIAVO

CH-7742 Ente Turistica tel. +41 81 8440571 fax 8441027 www.uncool.ch jazz@uncool.ch  
free trainride with festival-ticket an the Rhaetian Railway

# invisible jukebox

Every month we play a musician a series of records which they're asked to identify and comment on — with no prior knowledge of what they're about to hear. This month it's the turn of

## Kevin Shields/ My Bloody Valentine

Tested by David Keenan

Involving byzantine 60s pop and garage punk, Kevin Shields formed My Bloody Valentine in 1984 alongside Deb B Gooch, Colin D'Cousins and Dave Conway. On the basis of such four-part records as *The Heat Remains* (EP) and 'Sunny Sundae Smile', the group was bundled in with the then nascent DNO/C86 punk-rock revival. In 1987, Belinda Butcher replaced Dave Conway on the 'Strawberry Wine' 12" and Ecstasy mini-album. By now Shields's hallucinogenic guitar aesthetic had begun to take shape. He perked up his hard-rocking yet dreamily blurred trio on classic rock/pop forays on 1988's *You Made Me Realise* and *Feed Me With Your Kiss* EPs. With the highly acclaimed *Isn't Anything* album (Creation), Shields put blissful guitar invention back on the UK map. Late MBV were now prone to rapturous walls of single-note feedback lasting 30 minutes or longer. Following the release of the 1991 album *Loveless*, Creation were apparently unable to continue funding the group's legendary elongated studio sessions, and MBV signed to Island. As yet, no music has emerged from the dead, the group have parted company, and Shields has remained virtually invisible for the last eight years. In the last 18 months he has begun to break cover, working alongside Slint, Boom, Kevin Martin and Eddie Prevost in EAR, and forming Primal Scream. Mogwai, The Pains of Young Man, and Mercury Rev. Creation plan to issue a compilation of MBV EPs and rare tracks; meanwhile, a new album is apparently ready to go, and fresh from a guest appearance with The Flaming Lips in 1999. Shields is even planning to play live again. The Jukebox was his first interview since the release of *Loveless*.



**MUSICA  
TRANSONIC**  
"First Track" from *Musica  
Transonic* (PSF)

This sounds like a live recording. What's really weird about it is this guy was describing a group to me

the other day called The Dead C. He was saying they were basically a rock group doing really 'jazzy' 'breakout kind of stuff.' It sounds remarkably similar to this.

**This isn't them.**  
Who is it then?

Tokyo's Musica Transonic, one of a new wave of incredible Japanese groups. Their levels of distortion are similar to that eternal one chord passage you used to play in the middle of "You Made Me Realise". . .

It wasn't actually a chord — that's a myth — it was just a sort of jam, not exactly random, on the last chord of the song. It sounded like a chord because you had the sound of the speakers breaking up really heavily.

**If you like that kind of thing, you'd love a lot of the new Japanese music.**

When we used to play in Japan it was quite amazing. Everyone loved that noise section. Everyone was 100 per cent into it. You also had whole countries where they didn't like it.

**Which countries hated it?**

(Immediately, laughing) Germany. And Canada and Ireland as well. Dublin didn't really like it that much and they didn't really like it in Holland. They really liked it in Britain, France, half of America.

**East Coast?**

Well, LA people felt a bit weird about it, but Detroit loved it and New York was into it. We'd find whole areas where people would be into it. Australia wasn't into it. Well, not on the level that people elsewhere got into it.

**Was this something that you'd always do? Like, "Tonight I fancy doing it for an hour?"**

Mostly we did it until the audience seemed exhausted. It was a great relief for us, always. I'm not sure what the longest one was — you lose track of time. We went to 40 minutes or over on 30 or 40 occasions — that was almost average by the time we did the second American tour. When we began to play big places with large audiences, we began to disconnect from them and just got into it. There'd usually be some kind of club on afterwards so it didn't matter if we ended late. When it got to midnight, people just started dancing [laughs].

**RAFAEL TORAL**

"Wave Field (Radio Edit)" from *Wave Field* (Dexter's Cigar)

No. I've never heard this before.

**It's a My Bloody Valentine tribute.**

What? Really? [Looks at the sleeve, a pastiche of the cover of *Loveless*, and laughs] That's bizarre!

**He's a Portuguese guitarist.**

The cover's great. I think musically it doesn't really relate. It's his own thing. It seems indulgent in that he's allowing himself to be completely into what he's doing

and not worrying that people will perceive this in a certain way, or that he's not making progress or covering new ground. Small underground releases are great. I'll hopefully get into that because that's the sort of thing that would free me up. To do stuff extremely indulgently and not have to over-promote it or try to go on tour.

**It's difficult when you've got an albatross hanging round your neck, which is how some people might view the legacy of a group like MBV.**

I tried to make a My Bloody Valentine record for three or four years and I found that I was creating whole areas and concepts. I became too conceptual, which is where I went wrong. I was self-consciously trying to live up to some of the ideas in my head which, through just trying to articulate them, turned into concepts. I'd been influenced by drum 'n' bass, this whole concept of free time where things just kind of drifted along. That's why I like a lot of folk-blues stuff, because I was into the way that, when they do the finger picking, it's actually a type of jam, a freeform picking style. It's not repeating itself but just going along. The timing of the chord changes and where the individual bits come is all kind of random. A lot of the early drum 'n' bass stuff is like that, with those ripping snares repeating. It was full of that, all kinds of tensions and explosions.

**If you'd made an MBV record straight after *Loveless*, would it have been a drum 'n' bass record?**

Really drum 'n' bass influenced. We would have slowed it down. We were using the drum 'n' bass framework of jazzy freeform style drums but with a more mid-paced style and feel.

**Have your ideas changed now?**

Well, there's about half an album's worth of stuff that will definitely come out. Stuff that I've always liked because they're nice tunes and the music hasn't dated. There's one song that's 160 bpm drum 'n' bass style, except that it's mostly snare-based, like a constant rollercoaster effect, or like a mixture of a train and a rollercoaster. It's really heavily phased and distorted, so instead of sounding like a drum track it sounds like a kind of strange rhythm track.

**Is it all purely percussive?**

It's got guitar and vocals by me on that one. There are lyrics but it's not finished. Kind of 60s melodic — it's nice. I managed to match the rollercoaster effect of those quick drums with kind of optimistic Beach Boy chord changes. Well, Bacharach meets Beach Boys. It feels really natural. That's where we were for a long time.



**DEREK BAILEY**  
"N.J.I.B.H. (Remix)" from  
*Guitar, Drums 'N' Bass* (Avant)

[Long pause] Interesting. It's like somebody who comes from a background of freeform noise guitar stuff

and says, 'Oh, I'll do a drum 'n' bass thing now.' Just gets a beat and plays over it.

## invisible jukebox

### Do you think it works?

I think it's likeable because it's so like a tube of consciousness, like looking down a tube at the world. The guitar sounds like [mimes frenzied air guitar]. It's just the commitment that's likeable. It's just all right. I mean, if I was to compare it to really great stuff then no, it's not there.

### Well, you're pretty spot on with your comments. It's Derek Bailey.

Don't know him.

### He's a heavyweight free guitarist.

I could hear that it was someone that's not just messing about going blah! It's very likeable but I've heard so many jungle tracks from, like, '94, when there would be outrageous stuff on pirate radio stations. To me, it was outrageous music. In '88 when we released *Isn't Anything* you can hear the influence stuff like HipHop had on us — we sampled Public Enemy. If you listen to that track "Slow," the way we did it was very influenced by these sorts of things. We were still a complete rock group but it was HipHop that slowed us down and got us into all sorts.

### You're still into guitars?

Oh, completely. All of those groups that do dance music don't do great live gigs. For some reason it's not that exciting to see someone mess around with a turntable. When you have a guitar it's physically there. It hasn't been superseded — look at acoustic guitars. They haven't been superseded by electric guitars. Somehow all that electric energy affects people.

### The way you have to physically tackle the instrument includes an element of performance.

Yeah. I think though, that people who play turntables are as expressive as people who play guitars. But guitars feedback and interact with volume. Turntables, when they work properly, don't feedback, though maybe people will get into all that. I'm surprised that there haven't been many people playing turntables put through wah-wah pedals or distortion and effects. The guitar is just very accessible. What I'm trying to say is that I don't have a favourite kind of music. I have, ultimately, veered towards guitars because of songs and so on.



### BLIND WILLIE JOHNSON

"Dark Was the Night" from *Bottles, Knives and Steel* (CBS)

Yeah, this is great. I find this music very free sounding. Like the way

Indian music uses the fact that it's on one note as liberation because it releases a part of you which allows the randomness to occur without sounding disturbing. It allows your subconscious to take more of a lead role. You don't have to think about the chord changes. You're in a zone.

### It moves like breathing: exhaling and inhaling.

Yeah, that's what I mean, really organic. That for me, bizarrely enough, is the relation of folk blues to drum

'n' bass stuff, where it's going and how it moves along. If you're into it, it's quite relaxing. Entering the zone, even though timing-wise it's unpredictable. It's not 4/4 or anything, it's a gentle, unpretentious, understanding bass. It's why music that people perceive as spiritual is quite simple, yet would be incredibly hard to reproduce. It's those little nuances. What I mean by spiritual is music that comes from a real deep, deep feeling from people who are at one with what they do. Like guys like this.

### Do you know who this is?

No.

### Blind Willie Johnson.

Oh! [Laughs] This stuff makes me appreciate Bob Dylan, which I have really started to do lately. I saw *Don't Look Back* and he was just sitting there picking the guitar, and it was just after I'd been going through this phase of intense listening to loads of folk blues stuff. I saw where he was coming from and his style of playing, but it was much more direct. That was the thing about the 60s, being 4/4 was a very modernist thing. It was taking a confrontational stance because a lot of mainstream music was ballad based, which isn't actually 4/4. It doesn't repeat itself like that. When The Stones played blues in 4/4 it made it more confrontational, gave it a cave-man quality. As a result, they seemed more impersonal and alien to the people at large, these groups. Now we're escaping this. It's not radical anymore. We live in a society which has become 4/4 — bam, bam, bam, bam! You know? People are loosening up, improvising through being completely at ease with what you're doing as opposed to stretching yourself and being clever, without using concepts to propel yourself to new levels of experience. You get the feeling that people like Blind Willie Johnson would have been happy to play this same stuff for 20 years and it isn't outdated. Like a lot of world folk music, it comes from somewhere that's bigger than our conscious mind. It speaks in a much deeper way.



### THE NOMADS

"From Zero Down" from *The World Ain't Round, It's Squared* — *Top Teen Punk Studio Classics Volume 2 1965-67* (Teenage Shutdown)

It reminds me of when I

watched this French documentary on The MC5 and they record this rehearsal during a boom mic. It was just pure distorted sound through this 4/4 riff. There was also this great garage band called The Swamp Rats who made a few great records in the 60s. One was a cover of The Sonics' "Psycho." I don't know who this is.

### The Nomads.

Not the Swedish Nomads?

### No, American teens.

It was incredible that all these great groups existed — we were massively into this in the early days. There

was this library in Holloway Road and somebody there was a massive fan of The Milkshakes and all the associated records, all the Muggers and Pebbles series. We would just hire them out and play them all the time.

### These records had such an aura around them when you were just discovering that music.

Did you know we used to play the Garage in '86 at this club run by a guy who was in a band called The Cannibals? Ever hear of that scene? Our first audience was that garage punk audience. There was a video and every person in that video is dressed semi-60s or has a flat-top haircut. Actually, the guy from The Stingers was the first guy to get into us and bring people to see us. This was in '85 and we had the "No Place To Go" record out on Fever Records. That was a real 60s record — Lee Hazlewood mixed in with The Clamps. Fuzzy guitars and bar chords. That's why we looked the way we did — bowl cuts and chunky polo necks. Hey, it was cold back then! [Laughs] Still, you got to hear that Swamp Rats record — all backwards phasing and stuff!



### THE DEAD

"Helen Said This" from *World Peace Hope et al* (Shock)

This reminds me of something — something very obscure. Sounds like a gig, a live tape. Remember a

band called God?

### Oh course...

Round about '87-'88 there was a lot of people doing this sort of thing, a lot of pretty heavy stuff. This really reminds me of that period. It sounds quite tired, resigned, it's probably different if you're there in the room with them. The tone sounds unhappy yet without being miserable. Melancholic. In the 80s that's the way everyone was. Everybody was really fucking unhappy. No one ever thought that they would become massive or be successful. This reminds me of that real slow, draggy thing that Swans would get into. Repetitive but quite broken up and elongated. Some vocal which is just there.

So what happened in the 90s? I didn't feel any cheerier. Well, what I mean is that there was no underground in the 90s. Instead of all these bands playing in the basement of pubs, the underground became totally isolated. Literally impenetrable. Everyone else, because of Grunge, Madchester whatever, had this idea that you could go to the top and sell millions of records. The middle ground, which was the underground of the 80s, got completely occupied by people who, like the 60s garage bands, didn't have any philosophy that would prevent commercial success. That's what the 60s and 90s had in common. But like everything in our culture when it's understood — and rock music is very understood — it's conceptualised. Even with us. Our noise thing was old hat. What was original about our group was that it was very feminine music — not soft, feminine can be

extremely heavy. When you think of what a woman is, feminine music is no less heavy than a male. Its strength is that it draws you in. When people said we were meaningless or just unfocused with nothing to say, it was a massive misunderstanding of that type of energy, only seeing the superficial side of it. It was ridiculously focused music. It had to be just like that. This myth about me always re-doing things — 100 per cent bollocks! There was only ever one way to do those tracks. I never did anything twice. Most of what people think of us is just media crap and I've never bothered to clear it up. No one listens anyway. We were simply turned into a negative adjective: 'So lazy'.

**HIV were a very sexual group.**  
But not funky sexual. People think a lot of groups were influenced by what we did, but I just think that things are generally becoming more feminine. Feminine exists in all people; we're all a balance. We still live in a very macho country. The USA is probably the most macho country, closely followed by Iraq — coincidentally the two biggest enemies. They're obsessed with each other — the two biggest men on the planet are both grabbing their balls and screaming at each other! This supermacho stuff is the big threat. Like jazz, drum 'n' bass sucks you in in that way. John Coltrane is feminine to me. It's music that really feels. If you really feel something, then you can get away with murder. [Laughter] You can! You can do things that should be deemed pathetic. A lot of what we did could be deemed pathetic and our detractors always said we were vague and wishy-washy. The point is, it meant a lot. Look at The Pastels and us now — people never took either of us seriously at first — but we were so into what we were doing we were resolved to no one caring.

**How did we end up here? I just played you The Bead C.**  
Really, that was here? Hang on, play it again. What. I remember it now. Actually I do need to hear more, can you play it again? Some New Zealand guy was raving about them to me. I said he should bring them over here to play...



**TONY CONRAD**  
"4 Violins" from *Early Minimalism* (Table Of The Elements)

The first thing that springs to mind is that would be a great idea for a group, loads of guys on stage with harmonicas put through some kind of pedals. They could really make some heavy noise! [Breaks up laughing] Feedback, well you probably wouldn't get much but just real heavy tones! I love it! All those harmonicas in the background, you get that with this 'meatball' effect that I've been mucking about with. It brings out all these weird harmonics that are lurking there. It's actually really varied and it really draws you in. It's not trying to make some intellectual statement. Even if it is, then it's impressive from someone coming from an intellectual perspective.

**Do you know who it is?**

No, is it John Cale?

Almost...

Then who?

**Tony Conrad.**

Don't know him.

**He played with Cale alongside LaFontaine Young in The Dream Syndicate.**

It could also be a bunch of guys with those toy whirring pipes that you spin above your head. I loved The Velvet in the sense that here was a group that clearly really do what they wanted — music that was really gentle or extreme, ripped apart, violent music. They were never funny, though, like garage groups were with their adolescent punker stance. Even if it was against their will to get Nico into the group, that was one of their great blessings because it allowed them to have that more fractured, feminine approach. It's 'take it or leave it' feel, it's not desperate to convert.



#### THE PETER BRÖTZMANN OCTET

"Machine Gun — Second Take" from *Machine Gun* (FMP)

I've never heard this before. Wait a minute, it's probably what's his name, Peter Brötzmann.

Yes.

I was thinking it was, but I've never actually heard his music. I've just heard about it. I know a lot of people who are influenced by him. I got a big dose of that whole world through [God Techno Animal mainman] Kevin Martin. Some of this is more sedated than I thought.

**Some people think that this is the most extreme Euro jazz recording. A continental Assession.**

It's good, though. I like the big band feel and the contrasts. Put it this way, it's better than I would have expected. I never understood this music at first until I really clicked with John Coltrane. I never liked free jazz then; it was interesting for about 20 seconds and then it left me. At a certain point in my life I completely understood it from an emotional perspective. I went through a strange period in my head round about 93 to 95, and that's why the music I wrote was so strange. I got really into this state of mind between sleeping and waking — the hypnagogic state is the term. In that condition you're in a theta-wave state — fully aware — it's the state in which people do remote viewing. There's a massive dose of bullshit involved. A million times more complicated than Uri Geller on TV. It's a functional state for a human being to be in. It's natural. In that state, it's like an overdose of inspiration/overstimulated. It's the best way to become mentally ill, better than LSD. It's about illuminating structure and going into your own head into the extremes. In this state, the kind of music became purely natural. When Coltrane would take off, all in bewilderment, he was speaking purely from the subconscious.



#### THE BEATLES

"Strawberry Fields Forever — Take 25" from *Nothing Is Real* (Bootleg CD)

Wow! Now, I play this music when I need to feel good! Where's this from?

**It's a bootleg with all the takes of "Strawberry Fields Forever".**

Wow oh wow! I need to get this. I will find this. I've got about half of the takes on another boot, a general Beatles thing. [I'd love to be able to write a song like this. That's one of my great ambitions in life. I mean, because that didn't get to number one it was seen as failure for The Beatles! Ridiculous! I'm a huge Beatles fan still. The only bands whose songs I can play on the guitar are The Beatles, The Byrds and The Ramones. I have always been fascinated by the chord sequence of "Eight Miles High", so simple and inspired, just like "Strawberry Fields". I relate to John Lennon's singing idiosyncrasies; they weren't planned, he just needed to do them. Come on, can I hear some more from this? Stick on the first take. ] The new Kevin Shields My Bloody Valentine album will be released some time between now and Judgment Day.

"I'm actually a *funny* misanthropic miserabilist," says **Nick Cave** in this rare, revealing interview. Retracing the trail of *The Birthday Party* and *The Bad Seeds*, the tortured torch singer explains how he is beginning to see the light. Words: David Keenan. Photography: Frank Bauer

"I used to invent characters because I loved high drama and excessiveness... just the extreme of things," confesses Nick Cave, leaning forward, his elbows propped on needle sharp knees. "It was more in my creative interest to write that way. But that becomes tiresome after a while. There are times when things are going on inside you that you feel you want to talk about. But you have to have the ability to talk about them and the authority to talk about them. I didn't feel I had authority to talk about anything that went on in my personal life because I just didn't have one. My personal life pretty much was about being locked in a room writing. There's not a hell of a lot..." he trails off, stubbing out a cigarette. "In a lot of ways I had an imaginary life... and in a lot of ways I still do."

Five minutes earlier, Nick Cave was sitting awkwardly in an over-stuffed armchair at the fireside of the Kensington Gore Hotel, his lank, spindly shadow dancing manically round the corners of the room, as the flames from the fire cast him as the original Nosferatu man. Putting down his coffee and lighting up, he had muttered, "I really don't see the point in this. I mean, I'm not really doing anything just now. I've got nothing to say."

Noting Cave's legendary reluctance in interviews, I mentally prepared for a disappointing ten minutes of exasperated eyerolling, terminated by a fashionable shoe-navigating my ass towards the door. But I'm not here to subpoena him as a witness for his own prosecution. Within minutes he abandons his vaguely combative opening gambit. Instead he is by turns funny, self-deprecating and sincere, responding to questions serious or slight by wrestling with them silently until they yield some light. As we progress I learn not to puncture the dead air with encouraging prods but simply to wait it out. In moments of extreme luminosity he diagnoses the neuroses and fears which drive his music, while calmly accepting that he is powerless to control them.

To get a measure of the work done and the work ahead, Cave has taken 1999 off from the writing, recording and touring schedules that have occupied the best part of two decades. He might reconvene: *The Bad Seeds* for a new album at the end of the year, but in the meantime he is working in seclusion on lyrics and short prose pieces, with no fixed goal in mind. It's two years since *The Bootman's Call*, his best record to date: the one that comes closest to fully realizing his artistic project. He has often expressed the desire to write songs of deep personal illumination in a simple, clear poetics, and on that album he fulfills it in an idiosyncratic musical and lyrical language honed from mutated folk forms and the book of hymns. Crucially, *The Bootman's Call* feels like Cave's least forced record. In place of dense narratives, the songs speak more directly about human relationships and concerns. A true heart speech. Cave agrees: "I think you just grow up, you feel less of a need to impress. So that now, when I read a novel and someone starts to use overly fancy prose, it just irritates me, I don't have any time for it. If you've got something to say just fucking say it. I feel much more that way. Language for language's sake just becomes a bit tedious after a while. It's more

about intensity and passion and your relationship to the idea itself. All the songs I love are really simple basic songs."

The directness of Cave's songspeech is partly sourced in the dramatic, charged imagery of the Bible. It's a language which serves to swell and elevate its subject matter, diverting drudgery and disappointment into the stream of universal suffering, and lending isolated, otherwise meaningless acts a sense of destiny and fate. "I'm very attracted to the language of these theological books," he confesses. "I think that there's a way to maintain the poetics of things but at the same time be clear about what you're trying to say. I guess that's what I'm doing... a general adying up and honing down of language. It's quite a relief to write a song and realize that it's plain language and that it's still poetry; it still has poetic power but that isn't obscuring its point. Overly complex language comes from trying to impress people, and I guess if you mature in the right way you become comfortable with yourself and don't feel the need to do that. That's when there's a sense of grace about what you do. I guess,

where something's just presented plainly and beautifully and sincerely.

"I don't want to just present a whole load of masturbatory, self-referential drivel that no one can relate to," he continues. "I want my songs to be powerful and affect people. That's one of the problems that I'm quite aware of when writing about yourself and about what's happened to you. It's elevating your situation, your particular pain above other people's. That's something for me to be aware of. The balance of that is, if what you're writing about is sincere enough, it will relate to other people. I think there probably is a base experience that all people can relate to." He flashes me a sly sideways look. "I think I just relate to it more."

When Cave leans up to let in room service, I get my first good look at him. A heavy duty crucifix shows through the unbuttoned black shirt he wears inside a tight-out dark blue suit. Beautifully thin, his sunken chest and hollow cheekbones make him look like he's constantly holding his breath. Once back in his seat, he returns to his theme.

"*The Bootman's Call* continually speaks to me in some kind of way, even though the events that record was based around are long gone," he says. "The songs still breathe life into my past and charge the way that I see it. In fact, they actually change my past, which to me is another great thing about that type of songwriting, that you have a chance to mythologize, make heroic your past in some kind of way. The relationship you had may have been as satisfying as popping bubblewrap, but you can write about it in such a way that it takes on heroic proportions to yourself. It's this alternate intelligence that lives within songs themselves."

"Even so, I always thought my songs were very close to the way I am and the way that I think about things. They may be extreme in that some of them are about murder and stuff like that, but they are very much a reflection of the way I feel. I wasn't attempting to create an alter-ego or whatever."

Is it a source of frustration that critics often paint a portrait of Cave as a one-dimensional misanthropic miserabilist? "Yeah," he deadpans, "because I'm actually a *funny* misanthropic miserabilist."

## under a black SUN







Nick Cave is 42 this year. "Nowadays I really do feel that I'm writing songs from the mind of a man in his early forties," he states. "There was a time when maybe I had a particular kind of audience but nowadays I wouldn't have a clue who to write for. I'm attempting in some way to define my particular relationship with the world at this stage of my life. I don't have a crisis with that aspect of my writing, where I guess other musicians do. They feel they have to maintain their youth in some way. I'm happy to be getting old." He laughs like he thought he'd never hear himself say it. "I am! The most comfortable thing about my life is that I feel happy to be the age that I'm at."

The third of four children, Cave was born on 22 September 1957 in Warracknabeal, a little town north west of Melbourne. He still feels affectionate about it. "When I go back to Australia I realise I really miss it and do still think of it as home," he admits, "but I couldn't live there. There's a lot of things about Australia which would be the end of me if I went back. It's just too, too nice!" The pervading atmosphere kind of says that it's OK to do absolutely nothing, and it probably is. But in Australia I start going like, "OK, I've driven around in the sun today — now what do we do?" I do feel guilty when I'm just sitting about doing nothing. The thing is, work gives me an incredible amount of satisfaction, an incredible amount of pleasure. I can really tell if I've done something well — I have the physical evidence — and I can see that I've realised my potential by what I've done, whereas in other aspects of my life I don't always feel that way."

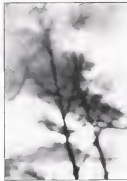
Music was never Cave's primary ambition. As a pupil of Melbourne's Caulfield Grammar School in the early 70s, he imagined a future in one of the 'higher' arts: a painter, or perhaps a great novelist. For years he felt uncomfortable in the role of performer. That's certainly changed. "The more I involve myself with music, the more comfortable I am with being seen as a rock performer," he says. Yet Cave came to music by accident when he fell in with a group of punk primitives called Concrete Culture, whose number included longtime partner Mick Harvey and drummer Phil Calvert. They mutated into The Boys Next Door, when guitarist Rowland S. Howard and bass player Tracy Pew joined. "At the time I felt I had 'higher' goals in my life," Cave confesses. "I wanted to write. Initially I wanted to paint. All of these things that I felt were higher up the creative ladder. To be a painter I always thought was the grandest of them all, but I failed art school. I don't think I'm very good with failure, so I just abandoned that completely. I happened to be in a band at the same time, but I didn't feel my heart was particularly in it."

If he discovered being in a notorious local group had its advantages — getting into clubs for free, women suddenly becoming available — artistically he remained unconvinced. "The kind of prejudice I held towards rock music back then I think a lot of people still hold today," he says. "But now I feel really proud, I'm really honoured to be working in rock music. I don't really know of an art form that can actually give so much to people. To me, as a performer and a writer, I think music itself is very mysterious, perhaps because I didn't really enter into it as a musician. I also feel it's very closely connected to the drume nature of things, because when I listen to music it goes straight into my bloodstream, it changes my whole body chemistry in that I have really no idea why that particular song has made me feel this way, but within four minutes of listening to a song, my entire mood, my entire thinking can shift and change and I think that's an incredible thing."

A rhetorical cargo cultist, The Boys Next Door developed at an alarming speed, as their music nuchotched off the latest imports by the likes of The Pop Group and Pere Ubu to hit Melbourne's shores. Their fellow Australian revved-up garage rockers,

The Saints, were also an important influence. "I remember seeing The Saints play," Cave enthuses, "and there were moments where my entire feeling towards life, my whole response mechanism to life changed and I know that I will never change back. Things can change you intellectually but this is a different thing — an epiphany. At the time, in Australia, I felt these shifts of heart, but I just felt that maybe all art has the potential to do that. I'm actually not convinced that it does now."

Their debut single — a cover of Lee Hazlewood and Nancy Sinatra's "These Boots Are Made For Walking" — and flatly recorded album, *Door, Door*, by all accounts scarcely suggest the churning, burning chaos of *Boys Next Door* live. By the time they had mutated into The Birthday Party, local success had fired up their ambition to leave behind the ultimately limiting Australian scene for England. Reading the British music press from afar, they turned up at the end of the 70s expecting nothing less than musical apocalypse. The mundane realities of the UK's post-punk climate brought them down to earth with a resounding crash. From the moment they landed, they found themselves living a precarious hand-to-mouth existence. The Birthday Party's music was increasingly fuelled on a combustible cocktail of disillusionment and negative reaction to the hostility of a style-foisted media and the primness of the prevailing scene. "I didn't have any concept for The Birthday Party," Cave remembers



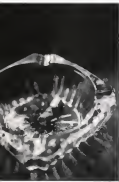
"We weren't an art band or anything like that. The way I remember it is that each of us individually were pissed off and had a kind of fairly undefined rage against things. We had a really strong idea of what we weren't going to be like and that was pretty much from coming over to England and seeing what was going on over here. It was a sobering — ah, well, it wasn't actually," he rolls his eyes, grimaces, "that's definitely not the right word."

They could never understand why everyone was uptight about rock (a recurrent British hang-up, always self-conscious to the point of paralysis), and the music press was dominated by left-righteous, left-liberal careerists. The Party hadn't kicked in.

"We had no like-minded contemporaries at the time," Cave recalls, "I mean we got on with The Fall, a great band. The Pop Group were great, but that was pretty much it. With The Birthday Party there would be applause and we were like, 'Fuck you, you cunt!' Cave pulls a mock punk sneer. "We were like, 'I don't wanna hear that!' Well, I don't wanna go back on! I didn't want to go on and make people feel good, the intent was to make people feel bad, to fuck them over and make them feel bad, and I think we had every right to do that, one of the great things about being young. Actually we probably didn't manage to do that. People still probably went away feeling good. I remember when we became consciously aware of the fact that people were going, 'Come on! More! Do it more!', that was the stuff where we shut down. We were looking at each other going, 'What the fuck!', before continuing. 'Everything sort of collapsed. We ceased to move on stage, just stood around and things ground to a bit of a halt with all that sort of stuff.'"

The Birthday Party were a beautifully jarring sensory overload. They combined an unerring ability to zero in on the dumb visceral heart of primitive rock 'n' roll -- big chords and stupid iconography, like the classic Ed "Big Daddy" Roth hotrod painting adorning the cover of the *Junkyard* album -- with a beautifully untutored take on howling feedback atonality, while a song like "Nick The Strapper" marks the beginning of Cave's self-mythologizing. But they were living the kind of lives that were impossible to sustain for long. By the time most of them had moved to Berlin, where they forged lasting alliances with Einstürzende Neubauten and militant guitar unit Die Haut, they were about to explode from internal tensions. Not even star Mick Harvey, Cave's "bulshit detector" and the proverbial calm in the eye of the storm, could hold them together -- not that he wanted to.

"Well, he certainly used to be that way," Cave laughs, "and there's still a certain amount of bullshit that goes on but I don't think there's as much. There was a time when I would play a song, just sit at the piano and bang at the keys and say, 'That's it!' They would say, 'Is that the song?' And I would go, 'Yeah.' And then they would attempt to land of turn something that was basically an idea in the air and a chord to play it on into a song. In the Birthday Party days I would actually sing what the song was like. I didn't really play anything -- so I'd just sort of say it goes, 'Da-Dun-Da-



Dun-Dun' and make a kind of guitar noise [his fingers flop over an air guitar] and Mick would go, 'Oh you mean Daw-Daw-Daw-Daw' and I'd go, 'Yeah!' That's how a lot of the songs were written in those days. I remember "Dead Joe" was particularly like that. It kind of goes, 'Oh-Oh-Oh-Oh,' and Mick would interpret that in some way, and he was really good at that. These days, of course, it's different. I come along and I have this song that works in its own right. Certainly on *The Bootman's Coll* I could play any of those songs in their own right, and they were successful just as vocal and piano. The band are clever enough and concerned with the art of serving the song to be able to recognise that they don't need a whole lot of coloration or decoration. I think I'm just a better songwriter. I think so, anyway, thousands would disagree."

Cave shakes his head, starts into the fire. "I don't really know how I feel about The Birthday Party. I mean, I assume those records are really good because everyone says they are. It's not something I listen to very much. I don't think I've ever willingly put on a Birthday Party record, even when I was in them."

With the demise of The Birthday Party in 1983, Cave had no clear idea of what he would do next. He had some new songs, slow thumping and broody, unlike the frenzied assaults on the last two BP records, the EPs *The Bad Seeds* and *Mutiny*.

"When we went into the studio to record *From Her To Eternity* as The Bad Seeds we had absolutely no idea what we were doing," Cave recalls. "The whole thing was purely experimental, an attempt to find a sound. Not define any sound but just to discover one. There were a lot of diverse elements brought together as far as the musicians go and it was just an attempt to see if, as a group of individuals, we could come to terms

with a particular type of music that we'd all be happy with. *From Her To Eternity* is a testament to that struggle. I really love that record because of it, it's very flawed but there were a lot of different attempts at different things. Attempts at defining, at narrative songwriting, using instrumentation as colour for lyrics and their meaning. Blao Barga'd's approach to the guitar was really unique and different to what we'd had before, in that he would basically read the lyrics of the songs and then play the guitar accordingly, as opposed to listening to the music. He's always done that."

Barga'd, Einstürzende Neubauten's charismatic presence, was hanging out with The Birthday Party during their final days and stepped in on one track when Rowland Howard walked out during the *Mutiny* sessions. He was an inspired choice as Bad Seeds guitarist. His primitive and atonal assault on the instrument serrated Cave's more traditional approach to bleak balladry. Mick Harvey's multi-instrumentalist role remained, and Barry Adamson, from Magazine, joined on bass.

Over the years The Bad Seeds' line-up has been in constant flux around the core of Harvey, Barga'd and former Die Haut drummer Thomas Wydler, its instrumentation shifting according to the availability of members juggling group commitment with their other projects and the changing demands of Cave's material. Over ten studio albums, Cave and his Bad Seeds have evolved their own idiosyncratic takes on deep-scarred



blues, haunted spirituals and call and response gospel shouting. But even as they might resemble existing American roots musics, Cave wasn't interested in replicating traditional forms to authenticate his songs' emotional content. Instead, he uprooted and transplanted them in the soil of his own richly imagined Deep South and watched them flower into related but distinctly different species. In his novel, *And The Ass Saw The Angel*, and on early Bad Seeds records, Cave maps out a powerful psychic geography, his dark places populated by the deranged outsiders who play out his fears and neuroses. In engaging with Cave's warped archetypes, The Bad Seeds have often given the

impression that they're pulling in opposite directions. Drawing on their variously primitive non-musically roots and avant sensibilities, they've grafted bastardized futurist-blues hybrids onto Cave's forms. To get an idea how far Cave's songs have evolved from their sources, listen to his 1986 covers album, *Kicking Against The Pricks*, where he layers Johnny Cash's self-mythologizing "The Singer" over his own version of the myth, next to songs by John Lee Hooker, The Alabama Singers, Leadbelly and Roy Orbison. Throughout Cave's work the presence of a primitive, affecting dualism smears beneath the surface. In suffering there's compassion, in joy, sadness. Such a dualism is encapsulated in The Bad Seeds' rendition of the old spiritual "New Morning," with which they have regularly closed their live sets, or Cave's duet with Shane MacGowan on "What A Wonderful World." It's heart-breaking to hear two debauched legends naively embracing all things good and positive. More commonly in Cave's songs, the joyous acceptance of the world as a good and welcoming place winds up face down in the dirt. The central character in "Jangling Jack" (from 1994's *Let Love In*) begins by toasting all the wonderful world's losers and winners, but ends up on the bar floor with a bullet in his head.

Cave's *Murder Ballads* collection is one logical outcome of the Loverman's vacillation between despair and elation. Critically undervalued, perhaps because he went overground with the Kylie Minogue duet on "Where The Wild Roses Grow," it's a moving rumination on the human faces lost to acts of sudden, incomprehensible violence. Like crime writer James Ellroy (one of Cave's heroes), who is obsessed with the real-life murder victim known as The Black Dahlia, Cave keeps poring over the



seemingly insignificant details, decisions and movements of killers and their victims that have such catastrophic consequences when they let love in. Cave's relationship to his characters is a complex one, where he takes on the role of psychotic killers and describes their deeds with comic, bordering on grotesque relish.

Nick is silent, staring into the distance as he formulates his thoughts. "I'm interested in what is righteous and good and also what is corrupt and touched by the devil," he remarks cautiously. "To me what makes a truly beautiful, truly worthwhile song is something that attempts to encompass both of those opposite poles. It's like you try to stretch the fabric of your life over those two poles — it's the split in the middle of it where the songs come out of. It's the tear in my own life. I'm not really interested in music that is wholly good or wholly bad. That's not an academic thing, it's what I feel goes on very much in my own life. There's a real desire to do good but also a real tendency towards destructive behaviour. I don't trust a song that doesn't hold within it the potential for pain or doesn't examine the whole spectrum of things. That's pretty much what I'll be talking about at the Festival Hall, I guess [Cave is referring to the lecture he will be giving on "The Love Song" at London's Royal Festival Hall later this month]. Without really going into it, it's about our right to be sad about things. That we have a God given right to feel that way."

**T**he corpse count of 1990's *The Good Son* is negligible. It's a heartbreaking and poignant record which emerged from Cave's sojourn in São Paulo, Brazil (a period of retreat with his then partner Viviane Carneiro). From the opening "Foi Na Cruz" on, sorrow stalks the whole affair. But if Cave courts absolute despair on a number like "The Weeping Song", where he performs a father and son duet with Blaise Bargeid, he counterweights it with comic hyperbole, by exaggerating emotions to an extreme degree.

"The Good Son" does seem kind of Brazilian to me now," Cave avers. "Certain elements aren't, it's really about my own conception of Brazil, not like, uh, samba and football. Apart from a couple of songs, *The Boatman's Call* is very English. From experience, though, my highs and lows are cyclical and it doesn't matter where I am, they just operate in this kind of constant circle. I'm either very up or very down and that's been quite a frightening thing in the past, but I just know that's the way it is these days. When you get older you learn to deal with certain aspects of your character. I don't think they ever go away, and I think that there are certain things that live inside of me that will never go away, but I just learn how to deal with them. I learn that they're destructive, I learn that they're out to get me, these particular forces are out to bring me down."

Does he feel the presence of this battle raging inside of himself? "Oh yeah, I'm very aware of it, very aware of it. Of the good forces inside of me and the bad ones. The ones that are going to nurture me in some way and the ones that are going to destroy me. I can feel them physically. Fear, for example, is something that I see lives inside of

me, and is something that is pretty much out to get me. It may begin with something small but it leaks through to everything until it becomes incapacitating and if I can't learn how to deal with that aspect of my personality, then I'll just sit and do nothing. But I do know how to deal with that."

Didn't becoming a father stabilise him? Did it change his outlook on life somewhat? He nods slowly. "Well I had to learn how to be a social kind of person with my kid

and it just connected me to all sorts of things. What it did was unite me with my father, in a way, who's dead. I found that I turned into him in some kind of way, everything I didn't want to be I'd become, and I was able to see — uh, I don't really need to get into all of that."

He pauses. Maybe he's starting to feel that he's given too much away. "Well, I was able to see him in a different way. To have a kid you just expand in every way, I find. Everything that was naked down, a child just comes and blows it away. If you're serious about being a father, which I am, you've just got to re-invent yourself in some way. They do it for you actually. I found it easy. Really easy. I'm always able to achieve what I set out to achieve with work. I guess within relationships, with other people and so forth — where the goal keeps shifting, where other people have their own responses to things — I find that quite difficult. But if you can set a task for me and go out and do it — I can. The task was to raise my child with love. I'm able to do that."

**T**here's a knock on the door, our time's running out. "Shit, I'd better speed it up. I've really been wallfing." Nick rubs his eyes, rousing himself for a final attempt at nailing down the urge that drives him to write. "You see, the songwriting process sums me very well in that it isn't fearful," he summarises. "When I try and write anything

that's extended prose it's a fearful thing to do in the sense that each morning that I do it, I have to front up to a blank piece of paper and sit there and that causes quite a lot of anxiety. With songwriting it's really to me a kind of crab-like approach."

He stretches his arm out to his side, slyly eyeing his hand. "Your book is beside you, it's not really in front of you, so you can jot down a line and keep talking to someone and suddenly you find you've written a song and you don't even remember doing it. I think that's something that's really important with my own songwriting, my songs have a higher intelligence about my own life than I actually do myself. In that sense

I feel that they come from somewhere else. They seem to know more about what's going on than I do, and singing songs over and over again in a live situation becomes to me a kind of journey of discovery about myself. My songs allow me to understand more and more about myself with repeated singing of them. If you get my drift. "... *Not Cave appears at London's Royal Festival Hall this month. See Out There for details. A CD of Cave's readings, And The Ass Saw The Angel, plus theatre music, by Mick Harvey and Ed Clayton-Jones, is available by mail order only from Mute Bank (see Directory).*



**“I’m either very up or very down and that’s been quite a frightening thing in the past, but I just know that’s the way it is these days”**

## DAVID GRUBBS 'THE COXCOMB'



available in february 1999  
LP and picture disc LP

**STEPHEN PRINA**  
**SASHA ANDRES**  
(vocals)  
**DAVID GRUBBS**  
(guitar, vocals)  
**DIDIER PETIT**  
(cello, vocals)  
**YVES ROBERT**  
**THIERRY MADIOT**  
(trombones)  
**QUENTIN ROLLET**  
(alto saxophone)  
**NOËL AKCHOTÉ**  
(electric guitar)

Released in the US in March, distributed by Drag City  
Released in February in Europe distributed in UK by These, in Italy by Wide, in France by IHL, Metamkine

+ Two

**"The Acqueduct"**

**"Close to the Kitchen"**

Re-issues : **EUGENE CHADBOURNE**

**DEREK BAILEY & NOËL AKCHOTÉ**

LP originally released in 96

LP originally released in 96

# AND

Derek Bailey (guitar)  
Pat Thomas (keyboards)  
Steve Noble (turntables)



ask for a catalog !

**Rectangle**

39 rue Ramponeau,

75020 Paris

Fax: +33 140 339 537

email: info@rectangle.org  
http://rectangle.org/



**John Parish**

**ROSIE Original Soundtrack Music**

On Swarffinger Distributed By Cargo UK

Disgrace Preisner created the soundtracks to some of the most powerful and beautiful films of recent years - *The Double Life of Veronique*, *Three Colors: Blue*, *Three Colors: Red* and *Three Colors: White*, and the monumental *Dolby*. All of them were directed by Polish masters and great of European cinema, Roman Polanski. His death in 1986 inspired Preisner to write *Requiem For My Friend*, a major work in two parts - *Requiem*, a moving farewell to his collaborator and friend, and *Life*, an affirmation of courage and hope.

## THE MUSIC OF PREISNER

### Requiem For My Friend

and music from the films of Krzysztof Kieslowski

This concert is the world's first performance outside Poland, and features Ettiella Tomaszewska, whose unique voice is based on the Preisner scores for the *Three Colors* trilogy and *The Double Life of Veronique*. The concert, which will be attended by the composer, will end with a selection of Preisner's music for Kieslowski's films.

**Friday 19 March 1999 at 7.30pm**  
**ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL**  
**0171 960 4201/4242**

"You're supposed to be able to get a chance to make your point about the world with this music," asserts free jazz guitarist Joe Morris. "One dimensional artists have one dimensional careers and end up footnotes. They may be part of a period, but you have to have a broader understanding and ability to change, to make a lifelong career of this."

Born in New Haven, Connecticut, Morris bought his first guitar back in the late 60s with the money he earned from cleaning jobs while attending a state school for troubled youth. Learning the exchange value of music the hard way, Morris has always insisted on making every note count. Music became his way of rising above his teenage problems.

In the years since, he has developed an instrumental voice capable of speaking any number of Improv and free jazz dialects. His playing expands on the disparate influences of James Blood Ulmer and Derek Bailey, all the while adding his own twists. Like Ulmer and Bailey, Morris has a no frills approach to the guitar, eschewing effects like fuzz, wah-wah, distortion or excess volume. Instead, his tone is crystal clear like Grant Green's. This quality, combined with an uncanny ability to make quirky phrases swing, makes his sound immediately identifiable. "I try to get the guitar to match what I'm hearing," he expands. "I use the pick, my timing, my

and sash pants, I wasn't into it any more," he recalls. Fortunately, back then, New Haven was something of a haven for musical innovators, such as trumpeter Leo Smith, whose activities opened Morris up to the collectively improvised free jazz of the 60s and early 70s.

The musicians making up this avant garde ensemble the rugged individualism and the freedom of expression Morris was after. He feels that their importance is unfairly downplayed today. "The whole dervish of the 60s guys as being like militant revolutionaries and not musicians is artistically so wrong, it is ignorant and misinterpreted beyond belief. The bunch of philistines running the music world and the jazz world, they don't know shit about art or about how people relate in a cultural way. They should stop and learn something else. Some of us think it is our turn to tell them."

Morris is largely self-taught, but in the US, jazz has been institutionalized, with Jazz Studies courses on the curricula of most major colleges. The academy is now the accepted proving ground for a once rebel music. Morris's usual composure shows signs of cracking when he discusses the academy's role in music education. "They should just brick up the windows, cut a hole in the roof, chase everyone out of the building and fill the hole up with cement," he says, with relish. "That would be much better for the music, given the attitude they

release his debut recording, *Wagonroad*. "Unfortunately, this is a grass roots, get-your-hands-dirty type of music. If you can't make your own records and call people for your own gigs, you don't get gigs. You can't get discovered in your house, the world doesn't work that way."

The subsequent tribulations of running the label and feeding a family has left him feeling unusually ambivalent about that first release. "On one hand, nothing changes. On the other hand, you know now that you have to do another one, because you were successful with one," Morris laments. "That creates a whole burden, because you've got to raise the money again, and also your head can get kind of fat from people saying that you're good. The second one was proof that I was playing music for a reason, rather than to make it."

But toiling away in relative obscurity took its toll. Critical acclaim is scant compensation when there are bills to pay. There came a point when Morris nearly threw in the towel. "Coming up with the seed money to make every record is really grueling, especially when you have kids," he reveals. "I pretty much decided that at the end of 1993, I was going to have to stop making records and give up being a musician."

In a last act of desperation he decided to bankroll two different recording sessions in one weekend. "I figured if

# disorienting notes

Discovering 60s free jazz kept Boston guitarist **Joe Morris** out of spandex pants. Jon C Morgan meets a musician whose music is as militant as his worldview

sense of placement and a clear, full tone to get as much melody, nuance, energy and surprise as I can out of the instrument. The guitar is not very flexible about inflection, so it forces you to work hard to bring that out of it."

Morris's goal is to create timeless, inclusive music that emphasizes communication on a collective level. He wants to demystify the notion that his kind of jazz, which traverses stark abstraction and adrenalin-fueled burn ups, is too difficult to understand. "I just don't think that people who listen to this kind of music are at the mercy of it. It's above that. It's about elevating people, and passing that message on."

"People can really get drawn in by music," he continues. "We mark time in history with music now. You know 'Well, back in the 60s, we listened to James Brown, and Jimi Hendrix.' All that stuff is what people want and a lot of other stuff in the world is just extraneous bullshit, a real drag."

As a troubled teenager, Morris was first seduced by rock, but he wasn't fooled by it. "When Hendrix died, and all those glamour guys came along with the high heels

develop in people who go there. As soon as they get out of the idea that there is a correct way to do anything, they are on the right track. If anything, I'm living proof that there is no correct way to do it. I've never done anything that people said I was supposed to do, ever."

"The question should always be why are they playing," Morris continues. "The point is, how much can you play like you, and what are you trying to play? If you are trying to play like you hate everybody in your neighborhood and you do that by playing a really big, loud drum set and you successfully get that point across, man, you are an artist."

In 1975 Joe Morris moved to Boston, where he formed an invaluable association with the influential and under-documented multi-instrumentalist Lowell Davidson. "Lowell was a real conceptual genius and a great musician," marvels Morris. "The thing I was doing up here was my own music and working with Lowell, which was really more interesting to me than what I could have done if I'd just moved to New York and begged some guys for gigs."

In 1982 Morris set up his own label, Rth Records, to

I didn't sell it to somebody, that was it," he says. Fortunately, both records were taken up, one of them, *Symbolic Gesture*, by the Soul Note label.

Joe Morris's long stretch of struggle has finally begun to pay off. The last five years have been marked by a slew of releases from AUM Fidelity, Leo Lab, No More, Homestead, Hatology, Knitting Factory, and ECM. They document duo recordings with pianist Matthew Shipp and bassist William Parker, trios with reedsman Ken Vandermark and pianist Hans Poppe, and Joe and Mat Maneri, and several versions of the quartet he founded as a vehicle for his singular compositions. Meanwhile, the audience for his work, and that of his contemporaries, has been swollen by the increasing numbers of detectors no longer prepared to choke on the fluff pumped out on the airwaves. "We have our own row that we cut through this really dense forest," he concludes. "People see that we are continuing something that they thought was done. Not only is it not done, we are just starting. Everything hasn't been said. Life goes on, and we have something else to say about it." **Joe Morris's most recent CD, A Cloud Of Black Birds, is out now on AUM Fidelity.**





Main image taken from Maryanne Amacher's *Mini-Sound Series* installation.  
Graphic symbol taken from *Music For Sound-Joined Rooms*

# expressway to

**Maryanne Amacher** is a sound artist whose city-to-city installations engulf listeners in ecstatic

Recently I saw Peter Bogdanovich introduce a screening of Orson Welles's *Chimes At Midnight* in New York. Bogdanovich explained that Welles had once told him, "The problem with films is that they're canned, they come in a can!" Bogdanovich asked what he meant. "Well," Welles replied, "anything that comes in a can can't be very fresh."

I think the electronic composer Maryanne Amacher would agree with him. Her new CD, *Sound Characters (Making The Third Ear)*, presents an unusual paradox: how can a fantastic recorded listening experience also be a hopelessly inadequate representation of an artist's work with sound? As a sound artist with a reputation for overwhelming volume, precise speaker placement, and site-specific environmental and architectural installations, Amacher has never released a full-length recording before. Until now the only pieces of hers on record were her contributions to the Asphodel label's *Throne Of/From Of/Down Of Drones* trilogy of compilations. Yet despite her invisibility as a recording artist, Maryanne Amacher is an experimental

music veteran, whose presence has been an important influence on artists working in related soundworlds.

"Maryanne is one of the best kept secrets of the Cage/Tudor scene," says Paul D Miller aka DJ Spooky. "She was one of the first people of that set to really deal with heavy bass, electronic bass, crazy bass." Rhys Chatham is also quick to sing her praises. Meeting her at Morton Subotnick's studio when he was still in his teens, she "became a kind of role model for me of what a composer should be," he remarks. "I've always been inspired by Maryanne, and her work had a profound influence on the music I made in the 70s and 80s."

Amacher's first major work dates back to 1967's *City Links* series, which continues (in theory) to the present day. In 22 separate pieces, sounds from one or more distant urban environments were transmitted in real-time via telelinks to an exhibition space as a continuous sound installation. All kinds of locales were used: harbours, steel mills, factories, airports, etc. In *City Links 15*, sounds from New York, Boston and Paris were



# your skull

noise. Here, guitarist Alan Licht offers a personal appreciation of New Music's best kept secret

meed in a live broadcast at WBAI in New York and then further transmitted to Radio France Musique in Paris — long before the Internet made such intercontinental practices common. "I was particularly interested in the experience of 'synchronicity', hearing spaces distant from each other at the same time, which we do not experience in our lives," she explains, noting that quite often a "flurry of activity" would occur in two different places at the same time. One example is the piece *No More Miles*, in which she placed a microphone in a Budget Rent-A-Car unit in an indoor arcade in Minneapolis, which was the acoustic double of the exhibition space's acoustics: voices, footsteps and other sounds completely matched those heard in the gallery. Visiting the gallery, you would hear the sounds produced by the installation as though people were moving and talking around you, like "ghosts in the otherwise silent space." She took the idea further by installing a microphone on a window overlooking the ocean at the New England Fish Exchange in Boston Harbour, transmitting the sound into her home studio continuously, sometimes using it as an element in other performances or exhibitions of

*City Links*. "I would come in and it would be different according to different weather and changes," Amacher told interviewer Leah Durner in 1989. "I learned a lot about shapes and I realised why I was doing this: in regular music you don't have any models to learn about spatial aspects of music. Usually the performers are on stage, or the music's on a record, and you don't really hear things far away or close up; you don't hear things appearing or disappearing, and all the shapes that emerge from this." She lived with the live transmission for three years. "I actually miss coming home to it," she says now, some 20 years later.

In 1973-74 Marjanne Amacher worked with John Cage and choreographer Merce Cunningham, collaborating on a ten-hour piece. Called *Empty Words/Close Up*, it joined his spoken and sung text based on Thoreau with her sound environment based on the acoustic properties of Walden Pond. "I remember going out there in the middle of the night with our tape recorders," she recalls. She also composed the storm environment



Zerbrechlich  
Fragile

44 The Wire

... could never have  
First Men; but, as was said, the third species  
developed in hearing, and in emotional sensibility,  
rhythm. Consequently, just as the First Men  
led into the wilderness by an irrational obsession  
contrivances, just as the Third Men themselves  
undone by their own interest in biological  
again, it was their musical gift that hypnotized

Daybreak  
Sunlight  
Hill - A - Car

for Cage's multimedia Lecture On The Weather, based on texts from Thoreau's journals, and many works for Cunningham's dance pieces from 1974 to 1980. Rhys Chatham recalled one piece "scored as a duet between the high tones generated by our nervous systems, which we hear inside our heads, and an external sine-wave frequency of between 15,000 and 17,000 cycles per second. Amacher would bring the external sine-wave in and out of the edge of consciousness to create a breathtaking new kind of harmony. Unfortunately, most of the audience heard the piece as 45 minutes of silence." She performed the same piece at the Kitchen to an audience of about one hundred hardened New Music fans. I would guess that about 15 out of the 100 people in attendance were able to fully appreciate what she was doing."

In the 80s Amacher began working on *Music For Sound-Joined Rooms*, for which she spent weeks on location studying the architectural features of specific buildings, and then created sonic and visual events for each hallway, room, staircase, etc. As she explains, utilizing multiple speaker configurations created "the effect that sounds originate from specific locations and heights rather than from the loudspeakers." By traveling through the building, an aural narrative emerged. Maryanne continued this idea in *Mini Sound Series*, which modified the *Sound-Joined Rooms* concepts to a format based on that of a TV mini-series. It involved a long running concert series over a four or five week period, "an evolving sound work 'to be continued' as opposed to a continuous installation or a traditional concert setting."

**A**ll this intense interest in site-specific sound doesn't readily conform to the notion of popping a CD into a Discman. A concert I saw at the Performing Garage in New York several years ago featured more than a dozen speakers placed carefully around the room, producing a two-hour hurricane of sound that filled not only the space but the listener's skull, to the extent that the sound actually seemed to be pouring out of your ears. More recently Amacher performed with Glenn Branca, Rudolph Grey and Z'ev at New York's Knitting Factory, whose speaker system was hardly up to the challenge of dealing with her extreme samples.

With these experiences of her music in mind, I trekked to Maryanne's home in upstate New York to listen to the *Sound Characters* CD. In my little corner of the world, its release is highly anticipated — I'm hoping it will give her the same kind of audience that other heretofore overlooked people like Tony Conrad or Loren Mazzacane Connors are starting to enjoy. The first thing I hear is piercing, cycling high-pitched melodies that immediately cause musical vibrations inside my ears. Maryanne calls this "Third Ear Music," which "stimulates our ears to 'sound' their own tones and melodic shapes" — the same literally ear-splitting experience I'd had at the Performing Garage. Next, I thought I heard a truck coming down the street. I soon realized it was a wave of electronics crashing over the still cycling first set of tones. Trembling, I knew that this music was too massive to really be experienced in a living room. It's like having King Kong for a pet — it resists captivity at every level. By the same token, the music filled me with a sense of wonder and awe I have experienced only a handful of times in the presence of pure sound. The CD played on, with excerpts from the *Sound-Joined Rooms* series remixed to two channel stereo. Most of the *Sound Characters* (originally presented in a three-storey tunnel in Rotterdam) features sustained tones in the midst of a maestros of electronic sound

One of its most interesting features is the extended fade, which Amacher says is intended to give the listener a kind of aural afterimage. "I had an hour long version of it originally," she notes. And how long was its fade? "About 40 minutes."

The unimagably confrontational *Synaptic* band has metallic sounds skidding into each other, with white noise blasting in and out of the mix. Even *Merzbau* (which it slightly resembles) feels puny next to it. *Dense Boogie 7* and *Chorale I* also create the third ear. Maryanne keeps calling *Chorale I* "stupid." Well, it is a very straightforward, repetitive set of tones that sounds like a modern connection pumped up to the max. Then all these strange low tones are triggered inside my skull, which change slightly as I walk around the room or move my head. In effect I'm hearing two stereo mixes simultaneously — one set of tones coming through the speakers, and another,

separate set of tones emitted by my own ears. In LaMonte Young's New York Orange House I've also had the experience of hearing shifting sound while moving round the room, but nothing like this. (Incidentally, Amacher has yet to visit Young's sound environment.) Maryanne is careful to point out in her sleeve notes that your ears and speakers will not be damaged by third ear sounds, and that they cannot be experienced on headphones. She says the third ear sounds are present in all music, even a Beethoven symphony, but are suppressed in the ear by other timbres which mask them (but are "usually registered subliminally"). In essence, using this psychoacoustic component as a basis for composition is a logical progression from the overtone based music of Young, Phil Niblock, Arnold Dreyblatt, et al.

When the CD ends, I ask Maryanne what her early influences were. In transcripts that, years before, she'd put her ear next to a cymbal and wanted to investigate what made up the wash of sound that it produced. She laments the fact that when the pieces on the CD were performed in their original locations, people "were dancing, they were running around, they were making out" and that listening in her comparatively small studio space is "like being in jail." She insists that the music is supposed to "make you feel good" and is very aware of the difficulty of listening to it in a

domestic setting. After one of her installations, Amacher cannot listen to her work at home for at least a month. Unlike most "house" musicians, the inellectable roar of her pieces is not an expression of rage, pain or despair — it's ecstatic and celebratory.

**L**ater, I listen to *Sound Characters* again on my own home stereo. Alas, the intensity of the experience I had upstate was greatly diminished. The third ear sounds were still audible, but not quite as persistent as they were earlier. Much of the electronics, which were so oppressive and monolithic before, now seemed contained and compressed, affording an interesting perspective on sound reproduction. The real question is if not recordings, what does Amacher want the final legacy of her work to be? She mentioned getting a building, a permanent space for her and other sound artists to exhibit in. A logical, if not entirely realistic solution to the problem of creating an enduring presentation of her work.

The line of my own personal listening history, which zigzags from The Velvet Underground and *Metat Machine Music*, to LaMonte Young and Tony Conrad, to Sonic Youth and Glenn Branca, to Japanese noise and Xenakis, ends with Maryanne Amacher. In terms of sheer sonic power, her music renders all of them redundant. And whatever its shortcomings as a document of her real aims, *Sound Characters* stands as one of the most devastating aural artefacts of this or any decade. ☐ *Sound Characters* is out now on *Tzadik*. A second Amacher CD will be released by *Asphodel* later this year.



**Opposite page, top row:** Maryanne Amacher at installation sites. **Lower rows:** Images from *City Limits*, *Music For Sound-Joined Rooms* and *Mini-Sound Series*. **Above:** Installing the Pier 6 Boston Harbour microphone at the New England Fish Exchange, 1973

# the primer

Like the composer Charles Ives, Ornette Coleman has suffered a commonly held misconception that he is a naive artist. Such an impression is rooted in two anecdotes, neither accurately reported nor understood. When Ornette got his first saxophone, an alto, at the age of 14, he taught himself to play from a piano tutor and mistook C on the alto for A. He eventually realised his mistake, but the misunderstanding made him examine pitch and harmony in a fresh way. Thus began the process which led to an improvising style based on freely moving melody unhindered by a repetitive harmonic substructure, and finally, to his theory of harmolodics — a democratic, holistic organising principle that accords equal weight to melody, harmony and rhythm.

The second fallacy stems from the time Ornette was a member of Pee Wee Crayton's group in the late 40s. The group's repertoire was heavily based on blues progressions, and the story goes that Ornette played the blues so badly that he was paid to keep quiet. In fact, he has always been capable of playing blues, he just chose to play something different. Crayton told him forcefully: play the blues or don't play at all. So Ornette put up and shut up.

According to this picture, Ornette was a recalcitrant instrumental incompetent who nonetheless became one of the greatest and most influential musicians of the 20th century. Surely some anomaly?

Ornette (somehow it never seems right to refer to him as Coleman, which fails to capture either the respect or affection he merits) was born on 19 March, 1930 in Fort Worth, Texas. He played tenor in his high school band (alongside saxophonist King Curtis, drummer Charles Moffett and flautist Prince Lashall) and in various jazz and R&B outfits around the roughest local nightspots. He was known as a barwalker and honker, influenced by the likes of Jay McNeely and Artt Cobb, though when he switched back to alto he favoured Charlie Parker and Alan Fager.

Most major jazz innovators, like Parker, looked the music forward by solidifying ideas already in the air. Ornette, like Louis Armstrong in the 1920s, knocked it sideways into a new groove. Where Armstrong supplied a collective, contrapuntal music with a vehicle showcasing individual genius, Ornette almost reversed the process, democratising the music and its performance by breaking down the hierarchy of tune and accompaniment, of leader and sidemen. Ornette's playing is firmly rooted in Parker's innovations — as recent recordings like *Sound Museum* make clear — but in freeing the melody, he piloted jazz out of its 30-year



A bi-monthly series in which we offer a beginner's guide to the must-have recordings of some of our favourite musicians. This month, Barry Witherden and Tony Herrington enter the free-wheeling harmolodic world of **Ornette Coleman**. Illustration: Savage Pencil

obsession with chords, opening the way to new modes of expression unrestricted by 'unnatural' musical structures.

In his late teens, Ornette's mentor was Red Connors, who encouraged him to perfect his sight-reading skills and introduced him to bebop. In 1948, while with Connors's group, he took up the alto again, but most of his professional engagements continued to be on tenor. In 1949, desperate to get out of Texas, he signed up with the Silas Green touring minstrel show. In Natchez he recorded several of his

own pieces for Imperial Records, but they were neither released nor preserved. Sacked from Green's troupe for trying to infect its other tenor player with bebop, he joined Clarence Samuel's R&B group. A few months later, after a gig in Baton Rouge, he was badly beaten up and his tenor smashed. Ornette believed he was being 'punished' for trying to inject his own ideas into the group's dance music, upsetting some punters. Such incidents convinced him that there was something mystical about the tenor. "The



best statements negroes have made, of what their soul is, have been on tenor saxophone," he has said. "I'm telling you, people want to jump across the rail [when they hear it]."

Stranded in New Orleans, he found it hard to get anyone to play with him until he eventually hooked up with Clayton's group, which took him to Los Angeles in 1950. In LA he made contact with like-minded musicians such as trumpeters Don Cherry and Bobby Bradford, and drummer Ed Blackwell (Cherry would later recall meeting Ornette in LA for the first time, and being freaked out by this bearded, eccentric figure who wore a hat and overcoat in the hot California sun). He also impressed Lester Koenig's Contemporary Records enough to make his first two albums, *Something Else!* (1958) and *Tomorrow Is The Question!* (1959). Aside

from Don Cherry, most of the musicians on the records, including drummer Shelly Manne and bassists Percy Heath and Red Mitchell, were grounded in cooler shades of jazz, somewhat limiting comprehension of Ornette's aims. But their openness and commitment to the music cannot be doubted. Both albums are well worth hearing.

Then came the pivotal moment. After hearing Ornette play an infamous season at New York's Five Spot Cafe in 1959 with a new group including Cherry and bassist Charlie Haden, John Lewis, of The Modern Jazz Quartet, managed to get him a contract with Atlantic. The records that followed would change the course of jazz for good.

## The Shape Of Jazz To Come

(Atlantic 781339 CD)

## Free Jazz

(Atlantic 781347 CD)

## Beauty Is A Rare Thing: The Complete Atlantic Recordings

(Rhino/Atlantic R271410 6xCD)

The recordings Ornette's quartet made for Atlantic between May 1959 and March 1961 were packaged by the label as revolutionary moments in jazz history (check the early records' futuristic titles). But the music justified the hype. The albums featured unparalleled compositions and performances, among them "Beauty Is A Rare Thing," "Focus On Sanity," "Ramblin'," "Tears Inside" and the ravishing "Lonely Woman." Whether ballads, blues or something more abstract, the music sounded graceful, meticulous and revitalizing.

On the first Atlantic release, 1959's *The Shape Of Jazz To Come*, a short-haired Ornette is pictured on the red and white sleeve cuddling a white plastic alto sax, which looks like it has been sculpted from ivory. Everything about the album is captivating: the paged unpredictability of the fast tunes, the crepuscular romance of the ballads. Don Cherry's adroit pocket trumpet, the crisp drumming of Billy Higgins, Charlie Haden's sonorous, richly melodic basslines, and Ornette's magnificent alto. As a description of his playing, Val Wilmer's "happy urgency" has never been bettered. These first Atlantic performances demonstrate how well he had learned from his early exercises in song form. There's more than just that singing vitality, though. Ornette's phrasing sounds both asymmetrical and perfectly balanced. His melodic sense is deft and elegant. His tone, though often sardonic, is capable of darting from shrieking falsetto to thin, lonely keening to burned, barrel-chested low notes. Its mimicry of human sob and laughter harks back to work songs, toasts, field hollers and beyond. His playing paints a rainbow in shades of silver and chrome, then explodes into a swathe of crimson velvet.

The following *Change Of The Century* (also 1959) opens with "Ramblin'," which features one of Ornette's best solos over Haden's Bo Diddley-inspired bassline. *This Is Our Music* (also recorded in 1959, with Ed Blackwell replacing Higgins) includes the haunting "Beauty Is A Rare Thing" and the group's first and last recording of a standard, the slow evocation of "Embraceable You." Scott LaFaro took over from Haden on Ornette (1961), and Ornette switched saxes for Ornette On Tenor (also 1961), which had Jimmy Garrison on bass. At the time, the larger sax seemed to make the execution of his ideas a little cumbersome, but the remastered CD version brings out the rich throatiness of Ornette's tenor tone. If his career had ended with these records, his place in the hall of fame would have been assured.

Ornette's time at Atlantic saw him branch into two new ventures. One of them proved a dead end, while the other turned out to be hugely influential. During their



Ed Blackwell with Coleman

time on Atlantic, Ornette and Don Cherry were sponsored by the label to attend the Lennox School of Jazz, where they earned the admiration of classical compositional academics like Leonard Bernstein and Gunther Schuller, the main exponent of the fusion of jazz and classical known as Third Stream. On 19 and 20 December 1960 Coleman recorded a number of Third Stream compositions with Schuller's orchestra (which included Eric Dolphy, Bill Evans and Scott LaFaro). Third Stream turned into an aesthetic cul de sac, but the sessions, originally released as *Jazz Abstractions*, produced some excellent music. The remainder of the two pieces included on the Rhino box set, which collects every complete track that escaped the fire which destroyed Atlantic's warehouse in 1976, and which is unconditionally recommended to anyone with the budget to afford it, brings out many subtle additional points.

The next day, on 21 December, Ornette let loose *Free Jazz* by a specially assembled double quartet, which learned Freddie Hubbard with Cherry, Ornette with Delaney, Haden with LaFaro, and Higgins with Blackwell. When the record was released in 1961, the cover featured a reproduction of a painting by Jackson Pollock, reinforcing the notion that this was the musical equivalent of Abstract Expressionism's trailblazing modernism. Despite its manifesto title, *Free Jazz*, which consists of a single 40-minute piece, adheres to a fairly conventional structure of solos interspersed with a ragged themed ensemble, but the double quartet format led to some stunning contrasts. The downside of the experiment was what it led to: the thousands of groups the world over who thought it was about getting up and blowing all at once.

## Chappaqua Suite

(Columbia 480564 2xCD)

### An Evening With Ornette Coleman

(Polydor 623467 2xCD)

By 1962, Ornette's quartet comprised Bobby Bradford on trumpet, Garrison (soon to be replaced by the unique David Izenzon) and Charles Moffett, who has never been surpassed as the most suitable drummer for Ornette's music. During a period of unemployment, Bradford returned to Texas, and the trio carried on for a while, playing at New York's Jazz Gallery. Exactly two years after the *Free Jazz* session, Ornette hired New York Town Hall for a concert featuring the trio, a string quartet and, for "Blues Misused", an R&B group. Most of the concert never made it on to record, but a few impressive pieces by the trio, plus the chamber piece *Dedication To Poets And Writers*, were released by the ESP label as *Town Hall 1962*. Soon after, embittered by the trio's inability to earn fees commensurate with their artistic (though not commercial) standing, Ornette attempted to become his own manager. He refused all engagements that offered less than he thought he was worth (he all offers), precipitating a two-year "retirement" from 1963-64, during which time he took up trumpet and violin.



In 1965 the trio re-emerged to play New York's Village Vanguard, and in June they recorded *Chappaqua Suite*. It was supposed to be the soundtrack to a movie by Conrad Rooks, but the music resulting from the trio's ten days in the studio was so powerful that the director feared it would overshadow his film. He hired Philip Glass to edit the music, but Glass refused to vandalise what he recognised as an exceptional piece of work. Against Ornette's wishes, Rooks sold the rights to the recording to French CBS, who released an edited version on a double album in 1967 (reissued as a double CD in 1996). *Chappaqua Suite* is nearly 80 minutes of adrenalin pumping, soul stirring, 20th century pastoral, angular blues, with

Izenzon and Moffett in magnificent form, pacing Ornette as he soars, swoops and strafes the brass and string ensemble.

The trio then left for Europe, where they gave a concert at the Fairfield Hall in Croydon, presented on *An Evening With Ornette Coleman*. At the time, the Musicians' Unions in the US and UK were still locked into an exchange quota arrangement. Of course, "serious" musicians were exempt, so Ornette set to and submitted *Sounds And Forms For Wind Quartet*, a classical "composition" in ten movements scored for flute, clarinet, oboe, bassoon and French horn. In the event the concert went ahead. In defiance of the MLU, it featured several performances by the trio as well as the chamber piece, under the aegis of Mike Horowitz's New Departures jazz and poetry organisation.

The irony in all of this is that Ornette later claimed that he wanted to be known more as a composer than a saxophone player all along. But his attempts to realise his "classical" works were frustrated by the perceived stonewalling of both the jazz industry and the classical establishment. (In the case of the epic orchestral *Six Of Amercia*, however, the problem lay more with the quality of the material.)

Ornette's harmolodic system first made itself evident in classical pieces such as *Sounds And Forms*, although its inventor says the system was already there in his music from the 50s. A lot has been written about harmolodics over the years, mostly about how impenetrable the system is for outsiders. But if you listen to what Ornette has to say about it — "I think of communication as a form of energy that allows everyone to be equal. I call it harmolodics" — it seems a wholly benign, intuitive and organic process.

Ornette described *Sounds And Forms* as a "combination of diatonic and atonal intervals that creates a form out of a sound and a sound out of a form in which the five instruments blend not by coming together but by moving apart". There were elements of indeterminacy built in, but they do not seem to have resulted in much variation in performance.

The Croydon concert prompted a heckle almost as inflammatory as the "Judas" job thrown at Bob Dylan in Manchester the following year. One of the two pieces was "Silence", which involved intense passages of improvisation interrupted by silences of irregular length and unpredictable frequency. During one of the silences someone in the audience yelled "Now play 'Cherokee'" (a reference to the "Johnny B Goode" of jazz, and a piece of music inextricably bound in with the legend of Charlie Parker). After a pause Ornette played five notes (the first five of "Cherokee") imposed to the lower intervals of the chords, apparently, napped out in a furious fury, and then, in case anyone missed the earlier allusion, threw in a direct quote. This snatch of melody was immediately exploded by a squall of exasperation from the alto, as if Ornette was as angry at himself for being provoked, as at the heckler for his selfishness.

That concert also includes the first recorded example of Ornette's trumpet and violin playing, unveiled on "Falling Stars". He is never as convincing on these



instruments as he is on saxophone, but then that's not the point. His adoption of the instruments was part of his search for an instinctive way of playing music, a desire to play "without memory", unrestricted by the baggage of conventional techniques and rules. He has described his work on violin and trumpet as being more "unconscious", although this concept is rather more plausible for the violin than the trumpet, which requires a certain basic grasp of technique before even the slightest phrase can be produced.

### At The Golden Circle Stockholm Volumes 1 & 2

(Blue Note 821184224/84225 CD)

### The Empty Foxhole

(Blue Note 8584246 CD)

### New York Is Now

(Blue Note 85784287 CD)

Though *Choppauro Sute* and *An Evening With* were his first recordings with the trio of Beneson and Moffett, the two volumes of *At The Golden Circle*, recorded in December 1965, were released earlier. At the time, bassist Beneson's remarkable technique, and particularly his weird, buzzing, wailing arco work, was applauded, but both Ornette's trumpet and violin playing and Moffett's drumming drew critical backbits. Moffett did not fit any category, so the simple fact that he was a most flexible, imaginative, powerful and witty percussionist tended to get overlooked. *The Golden Circle* sessions showcase some typical, fine Ornette songs, from the perky nursery rhyme transparency of "European Echoes" and "Bee Deer" to the atmospheric "Dawn". At about the time Ornette's innovations had triggered a strange critical syndrome. Earlier breakthroughs are sympathetically reassessed once something even more difficult comes along. After Archie Shepp, Albert Ayler, Pharoah Sanders and the cataclysmic developments in John Coltrane's later music, Ornette began to sound far more listener friendly.

On *The Empty Foxhole*, recorded in September 1966, his first studio recording for four years, Ornette showcased a different trio, with Haden back on bass and his ten-year-old son Denardo on drums. The choice of Denardo was another move in the process of minimizing the repressive effect of experience. Denardo was too young to have developed his own clichés and preconceptions. The idea works better on paper than on record. After Higgins, Blackwell and Moffett, Denardo certainly sounds limited, yet he contributes an undeniable freshness and charm to the music. Ornette's trumpet playing, while still sounding primitive, comes together on "Freeway Express" and the title track. Overall, *Foxhole* is one of his most atmospheric recordings.

The following Spring Ornette enlisted Jimmy Garrison and Elvin Jones, from John Coltrane's quartet, for *New York Is Now*. After so many years involved in Coltrane's struggle with the potential of chords, the question was how would they adapt to Ornette's melodic approach?

After Denardo, Jones's immensely sophisticated drumming could hardly have made a more shocking contrast. Of course, it caused a shift in the balance of the music. The relationship between the front line and rhythm section sometimes edges towards conventional jazz, but these are all musicians who know how to adapt, to interact, to give and take. Dewey Redman on tenor completes Ornette's new quartet. His guttural tone, and strange humming and gurgling effects, are a fascinating contrast to the bright, daring brass of Coleman's longtime foil, Don Cherry.

### Science Fiction

(CBS S64774 CD)

### Crisis

(Impulse! AS 9187 LP)

For Ornette watchers, the late 60s and early 70s are seen as a period of marking time. Two valuable compilations of unused Atlantic tracks, *Twins* and *The Art Of The Improvisors*, were issued as stopgaps, including a warm up version of "Free Jazz" (all these are now included on the Rhino box set). Then, in

1972, Ornette rounded up the usual suspects for *Science Fiction* (Blackwell, Higgins, Redman, Haden, Bradford and Cherry). For the first time, Ornette gave prominence to words and electricity. He drafted in Asha Puthi for the dreamlike (or trip-like) "What Reason Could I Give" and "All My Life", and poet David Henderson for the title track. "Rock The Clock" featured Ornette on trumpet and violin, Redman on musette and Haden playing bass through a wah-wah pedal. The title suggests that Ornette thought the track matched rock's preoccupations. But like the contemporary electric music of Miles Davis and Herbie Hancock, nothing on *Science Fiction* sounds compatible with rock's aims, attitudes or intentions, let alone its rhythmic sensibilities. The beat, though louder and more intrusive, remains an integral part of the total structure, rather than part of the rhythm track along which everything else runs.

The live album, *Crisis*, came out the same year, though it was taped at a concert at NYU in March 1969, with a group featuring Cherry, Redman, Haden and Denardo. It ignited controversy as much for the radical politics that underpinned Haden's "Song For Cher" (which the bassist recorded himself on his 1969 *Liberation Music*

*Orchestra* album) and Ornette's "Trouble In The East", as for the startling nature of the music. Ornette was used to being censured on musical

Ornette keeps score



## the primer

groups, so being censored because of his politics can't have been a major shock. In any event, Ors is a ferocious, heavyweight performance. Light on the joyousness so often at the centre of Ornette's music, but certainly cathartic.

### Body Meta

(Jamaaladeen/Verve 531916 CD)

### Dancing In Your Head

(JSM 396999 CD)

If funk is a basketball thwacked smartly between hand and floor, Prime Time kicked it down a hill and chased after it, sometimes careering out of control in their attempt to catch up with it.

Prime Time was the group Ornette formed in the mid-70s to carry his harmolodic vision forward using the ideas laid down on *Science Fiction*: the introduction of electric instruments, the mutation of rhythm patterns patented by Hendrix, James Brown, The Grateful Dead. The group would eventually be constituted as a double trio (two guitars, two basses, two drummers), all swapping lead and rhythm lines at will, plus Ornette), but its earliest incarnation was a quartet featuring guitarist James Blood Ulmer and drummer Ronald Shannon Jackson. Live, Prime Time was all bawling aggression verging on nihilism, it sounded like Ornette was holding up the roof while the others demolished the walls. Whatever the leader's democratic intention, Ornette has always dominated Prime Time, whether

because of the relative anonymity of some of the musicians who would subsequently come into the group, or because of the way the music is set up. His incisive, elegant alto playing, spooling out endless melodies and spanning the tonalities, remained the focus of attention, while the rest of the group busied themselves around him.

Prime Time sounded more cohesive in the studio, where the musicians' parts could be better separated. The tracks on *Body Meta* and *Dancing In Your Head* were cut at the same session in Paris in December 1975 and were the group's first recordings. Ulmer had left by this point, and the records feature the twin guitars of Charles Ellerbee and Bern Nix, their lines entwining each other like rapturous serpents while overlapping with Jamaaladeen Tacuma's finger-popping basslines and Shannon Jackson's parade ground multirhythms. Among the five tracks on *Body Meta* are reworkings of two old favourites, "European Echoes" and "Macho Woman". The pattern was set clearly, with Ornette dictating the pace and Prime Time sounding like a big band in revolt in the back of the studio, especially in the early stages of "Home Grown".

*Dancing In Your Head* includes a brief extract from the recordings Ornette and clarinetist Robert Palmer made with The Master Musicians Of Joujouka in Morocco in 1973 (apparently, about three albums' worth of material was recorded but has never seen the light of day). The album's two long Prime Time tracks sound relentless and claustrophobic next to the freshness of this meeting of cultures — one characterising 20th-century jazz, the other representing a tradition which for centuries pervaded and guided the development of music across thousands of miles of Southern Europe, Eurasia, North Africa and India. Yet in both contexts Ornette himself comes across as adventurous, authoritative and utterly sincere.

Unintentionally, Jamaaladeen Tacuma's 1984 album *Renaissance Man* contains a version of "Dancing In Your Head" which is pure digi-funk breakdown, featuring Ornette blowing over a group that includes Charles Ellerbee and a DMX drum machine.)

In 1978 Ornette joined Denardo and Jamaaladeen for the sessions which would produce James Blood Ulmer's debut album, *Tales Of Captain Black*, which was released on Ornette's own Artists House label. Like *Dancing In Your Head*, the tracks on *Captain Black* chimed with the music and attitudes that were

beginning to emerge from New York's rock, jazz and art house hinterlands under the No Wave banner. As with Prime Time, Ornette's influence on the record is pervasive. Perhaps because there are fewer instruments involved (for maybe Ulmer is a more assertive leader), the music seems less cluttered than Prime Time's. When it does start to get tangled, it's usually Ornette who opens it up.

By this point Shannon

Jackson had left to form his own electro-harmolodic troupe, The Decoding Society. The next Prime Time album, *Of Human Feelings*, which was recorded in 1979 but not released for three years, featured Denardo and Calvin Weston on drums. Despite containing some typically euphonic Ornette compositions ("Times Square", "Sleep Talk"), it was a curiously clinical sounding record, largely due to Ornette's production, which separated the music's component parts with digital precision, but in the process sucked all the grit out of it on a collective level.

The live *Opening The Caravan Of Dreams* was the other way. Recorded in 1985 at the futuristic Caravan of Dreams venue in Ornette's old hometown of Fort Worth, Texas, it contained Prime Time's most wittingly complex music yet, made more so by the addition of Al MacDowell, doubling up the bass parts with Jamaaladeen. "Compute" looks forward to the land of abstract electronic phantasies of *Virgin Beauty*. The rest appears to speak in vernaculars that veer from the vaguely recognisable (the almost-funk of "Sex Spy") to the unfathomably alien ("Harmolod: Sebbo"). It still sounds like no other music you might have heard.

### Ornette Coleman & Pat Metheny

(Sign 4)

(Geffen 524096 CD)

### In All Languages

(Harmolod/Verve 531915 2xCD)

Despite his use of electric guitars in Prime Time, which he said could deliver the kind of textures otherwise only available from an orchestral violin section, Ornette's 1986 album with Pat Metheny came as something of a surprise (although in the light of Metheny's apocalyptic meeting with Direk Bailey on 1997's *The Sign Of 4*, the project appears very benign). Metheny had already played with previous members of Ornette's groups, including Redman, Haden and Higgins, and both Prime Time guitarists had studied under him at Berklee, but the question still remained: why would Ornette choose to record with the guru of jazz-lit, rather than, say, Ulmer, Sonny Sharrock, or Vernon Reid? One answer is that it presented a challenge to both musicians. (Another might have something to do with the fact that Metheny was signed to Geffen.) Although Metheny does most of the adjusting, there is an evident respect for each other's playing and writing throughout, and flanked by Haden, Denardo and second drummer Jack DeJohnette, they exceed everyone's expectations except their own.

To underline the assertion that the principles buttressing Prime Time had been there all along, the 1987 double album *In All Languages* was subtitled "30 Years Of Harmolodic Music". One disc features a reformed version of the classic quartet (Cherry, Haden, Higgins), and the other showcases the double trio version of Prime Time that had been in place since the *Caravan Of Dreams* album. Several themes are common to both records, and the album is an ideal crash course in Coleman's evolution. In some instances, the two versions of a tune are unexpectedly similar, but



James Blood Ulmer

it feels like there is more to marvel at and be moved by on the quartet tracks. Since his quartet musicians carry more artistic weight than the members of Prime Time, Ornette's role in the former is closer to his desired democracy: Cherry easily counterbalances him as a front line player, and Haden and Higgins sound more individual than the components of the electric group.

The follow-up to *In All Languages*, 1988's *Virgin Beauty*, drew attention by featuring a guest appearance by The Grateful Dead's Jerry Garcia. More crucially, the title track, with Ornette's trumpet floating through a solitary forest of decaying lines and crumpling electronics, was a "ballad" performance as startling as the 1959 version of "Beauty Is A Rare Thing".

**Ornette Coleman and Howard Shore**  
*Naked Lunch: OST*  
 (MCA 262732 CD)

**Tone Dialing**  
*Hamulodic/Verve 527483 CD*

**Ornette Coleman and Joachim Kühn**  
*Colors*  
 (Hamulodic/Verve 537789 CD)

In the early 90s, Ornette further expanded both the line-up and textural possibilities of Prime Time by adding keyboard player Dave Bryant and tabla player Badal Roy. He also formed a new acoustic quartet which featured M-Base pianist Geri Allen and bassist Ornette Mottlet, son of Charles, Ornette's drummer of three decades earlier.

There were other significant developments throughout this period. In 1992 Ornette played the lead role in Howard Shore's soundtrack to David Cronenberg's film of William Burroughs's *Naked Lunch*. The score set Ornette down in a number of scenarios, all of them riveting: the fleet, high-energy info performances with Denardo and bassist Barre Philips revived memories of the *Chopptopia Suite* sessions; while the combination of Ornette's wounded alto cry, and wayward trumpet and violin improvisations, with Shore's Hollywood-dramatic orchestrations should never have worked, but proved irresistible. Pacing Burroughs's own experiences in North Africa, Shore's score even folded in a sample of Ornette's 1973 Moroccan recordings from *Dancing In Your Head*.

Then, three years later, PolyGram banished Ornette to start a new label, Hamulodic Records. Its first release was the 1995 *Tone Dialing* album, which grew out of a multimedia work premiered at the 1994 San Francisco Jazz Festival

The performance included Prime Time and the new acoustic quartet alongside dancers, poetry, film projections and demonstrations of rhapsodic body percussions. ("The whole gamut of feelings humans have was present at that concert," Ornette said. "It was very healthy. It wasn't about ego or money or sex. It was about democracy and the different things people do to get in touch with their spirituality.")

On the album *Tone Dialing*, recorded with the new expanded Prime Time line-up, Ornette continued to refine the processes he had begun with *Virgin Beauty*, making the music more homophonically focused and rhythmically tight: The careering ball had been brought in check — a bad move, some thought, akin to Rochester's blinding, or the caging of the Creature from the Black Lagoon. A more balanced view has it that Ornette had assessed his experiences and identified new pathways. He once told Val Wilmer, "When you hear me you probably hear everything I've heard since from when I was a kid. In fact, it's a glorified folk music." One of his most varied and accessible albums, *Tone Dialing* is a late demonstration of what he means by that. After half a century of ploughing a very personal furrow with an almost self-immolatory integrity and

determination, he has finally relaxed enough to say that his music should not be judged according to whether he can play bebop, blues or "Cherokee" — he can play them all and a few other things beside. On *Tone Dialing* he ventures into Bach, rap, sound collage, and Latin and Caribbean rhythms with equal conviction.

Ornette's reconciliation with the piano, in the person of Geri Allen, was more surprising. The group on 1958's *Something Else!* had included a pianist, and the same year Ornette recorded with Paul Bley, but he did not use a keyboard player again until David Bryant joined Prime Time in 1992.

Whatever, in August 1996, Ornette invited the German pianist Joachim Kühn to make an album of duets, which was recorded live at the Leipzig Jazztage and released in 1998 as *Colors*. If anything, the eight tracks of high octave improvisation stretch Ornette even more than his work with Prime Time. He rises to the occasion magnificently, and prompts Kühn into some of his finest work too. This intense but intimate music sounds far removed from the sensory overload of the *Tone Dialing* performance. But taken together they underline the breadth of vision that characterises all of Ornette Coleman's music. It isn't just about jazz. It never was. □

**Ornette and Prime Time,**  
*London 1987*



# charts

Playlists from the outer limits of planet sound

## Galaxy 15

**Aphex Twin** Windowlicker (Warp)  
**Immense** Test Pressing (Fat Cat)  
**Prince Paul** Prince Among Thieves (Tommy Boy)  
**Mask** Mask 500 (Mask)  
**Gas** Oktober (Mile Plateau)  
**Squarepusher** Budakhan Mindphone (Warp)  
**Add N To X** Avant Hard (Mute)  
**Shadow Huntaz** Nut Up (Plug Research)

**Barry Adamson/Jon Spencer** Blues Explosion  
 Star Smalls (Mute)  
**Frederic Galfano** Sabre (F Communications)  
**James Plotkin/Mark Spybey** A Peripheral Blur  
 (Kranky)  
**Kaman Leung** Veritas (A Pris Plan)  
**Live Human** Test Pressing (Fat Cat)  
**Isan** Call (Atom)  
**Dalek** Negor, Necro, Nekkos (Spokenword)  
*Compiled by Matt Thompson, Galaxy 102 FM, Manchester*  
*Ends: 10.50am-1.50am*

**P16.D4** Kuhe In Halber Trauer (Odd Size)  
**Tod Dockstaeder** Two Fragments from Apocalypse  
 (Sarkland)  
*Compiled by Harry Pronger, Pop Art/220 Volt, De  
 Concordia, Hilversum, Netherlands*

## Fonosenzus 15

**Eugene Chadbourne** Solo Acoustic Guitar Vol 2  
 (Rastacan)  
**Remote Viewers** Low Shapes In Dark Head (Leo)  
**Dave Douglas** Sanctuary (Avant)  
**Gianni Gebbia** H Portraits (Rastacan)  
**ROVA** Brago (Wco)  
**David S Ware Quartet** Oblations And Blessings  
 (Silkheart)  
**Ivo Perecin with CT String Quartet**  
 The Alexander Suite (Leo)  
**Charles Gayle Quartet** Daily Bread (Black Saint)  
**Burgener/Philips/Schütz String Trio** Heat Transfer  
 (For 4 Ears)  
**Marginal Consort** Collective Improvisation (PSF)  
**Lawrence "Butch" Morris** Conduction #70, Tit For Tat  
 (For 4 Ears)  
**Vajra** Shomon (PSF)  
**Deep Listening Band** Non Stop Flight (Music & Arts)  
**Amir Koushkani** Guest (Songlines)  
**Various** Music Of Indonesia Vol 16 & 17  
 (Smithsonian Followings)  
*Compiled by Mierko Macioro, Fonosenzus, Yu Radio 100.4 FM,  
 Beograd, Yugoslavia, Thursdays 11pm-midnight*

## The Office Ambience

**Cristian Vogel** Busca Invisibles (Tresor)  
**PIL** Plastic Box (Virgin)  
**Rob Swift** The Ablez (Asphodel)  
**Robert Rittman's Steel Cello Ensemble** Zuuht®  
 Mute Mumi! (Die Stadt)  
**Squarepusher** Budakhan Mindphone (Warp)  
**Os Mutantes** Os Mutantes (Om Platten)  
**Vinícius Centuriu** Tacuma (Verve)  
**Jack Smith** Silent Shadows On Cinemacroc Island  
 (Audio Arise)  
**Dorgan & William Parker** Broken/Circle (Jumbo)  
**Divine Styler** Wordpower 2 Directrix (DIX)  
**Summer Crane** John Gavarni An Opera (Atavistic)  
**Mantronix** The Best Of Mantronix 1985-1999 (Virgin)  
**Electro Putas** 6 Or 7 Special Operates (Input)  
**Thurston Moore/Evan Parker/Walter Prati** The  
 Promise (Material Sonori)  
**Gas** Kangorlorst (Mile Plateau)  
*Compiled by The Wire Sound System*

Cristian Vogel

## Nuances Sonores 15

**Jocelyn Robert** 20 Moments Blancs Lents  
 (OHM/Avarat)  
**Carsten Nicolai/Noto** (Rastemusic)  
**DJ Spooky** Riddim Warfare (Getten)  
**Compost 2** No Title, No Copyright (OHM/Avarat)  
**Various** Further Mutations (Lo Recordings)  
**Hikashu** 4 Track Bootleg (Angelika Kohlermann)  
**Euphone** Breaking Parole EP (Hetty)  
**Burgener/Philips/Schütz** Heat Transfer (For 4 Ears)  
**Fennest** Fennest Plays 7" (Mego)  
**Luc Ferrari** Cellule 75 (Tzadik)  
**Happy Kamiyama** Juice And Tremolo (Sonore)  
**Various** 30 Years Of Musical Insurrection In France  
 (Spatal)  
**Orchestra 33 1/3** Orchestra 33 1/3 (Rha)  
**Rubin Steiner** Lo-Fi Nu Jazz (Mier/Mazkine)  
**Bernard Heidecock** Publicite (Alga Margheri)  
*Compiled by Fred Lander, Sonares/Nuances Sonores,  
 Radio Beton 93.6 FM, Tours, France*

## Pop Art 15

**Jim O'Rourke** Eureka (Domino)  
**THU 20** Derde Schel (Sidelust)  
**Ralf Wehowsky** Vier Vorspiele (Selektion)  
**The Red Krayola** The Parable Of Arable Land (Radar)  
**Stephen Vitiello** The Light Of Falling Cars  
 (JDK/Lowlands)  
**T-Model Ford** You Better Keep Still (Fat Possum)  
**Anne Gills** Rapid Eye Movement (Howard 31  
 compilation/Artware)  
**Haffler Trio** Bull Baring (Mastery Of Money) (Touch)  
**Navigator** Beaching Nostalgie (Swart Finger)  
**Ma Cherie For Painting** Una Production Pop  
 (Enavrom)  
**Alan Liche/Loren Mazza/Cane Connors**  
 Hoffman Estates (Drag City)  
**John Zorn** Elegg (Tzadik)  
**Ultra Milkmaids** Jam UmpouJet (Drone Records)

# space age RECORDINGS®



Spacemen 3 "Playing With Fire" (Orbit011CD) e-mixed version of the Spacemen's seminal album. Now a definitive 22 track double CD featuring 9 new mixes, demos and previously unreleased tracks. Limited edition (3000 copies) embossed gatefold CD double pack. Available at the price of a single album.



Spacemen 3 "Threeble 3" (Orbit020CD) In conjunction with the re-issue of "Playing With Fire" there is a strictly limited (1000 copies only) edition of the long deleted vinyl issue of "Threeble 3" on CD for the first time. Available in a cardboard slip case by mail order only at £6.00, (£3.00 if ordering with "Playing With Fire")

For mail order enquiries please contact the numbers below:

Space Age Recordings, PO Box 8, Corby,

Northamptonshire, England. NN17 2XZ

Mail Order telephone: 01536 202295

Mail Order fax: 01536 266246

E-mail: [spaceage@adasam.demon.co.uk](mailto:spaceage@adasam.demon.co.uk)

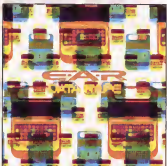
Web site: [www.adasam.demon.co.uk/spaceage/](http://www.adasam.demon.co.uk/spaceage/)

**CARGO RECORDS**

Space Age Recordings are proudly distributed by Cargo Distribution.



Spectrum/Silver Apples "A Lake of Teardrops" (Orbit016CD) Sonic Boom and Spectrum join forces with the seminal 60's act Silver Apples on a brand new 6 track mini album. Initially available in a limited edition deluxe gatefold sleeve with silver foil block detail. (2000 copies.)



E.A.R. "Data Rape" (Orbit013CD/LP) Out now. New full length release features 8 "circuit bent" studio compositions. Available on CD and gatefold double vinyl pack. Also, very limited edition of 100 copies in red vinyl, by mail order only.



Spacemen 3 "Dreamweapon" (Orbit001CD) CD only. Gatefold double vinyl now sold out

Spacemen 3 "Live In Europe 1989" (Orbit002CD) CD only. Gatefold double vinyl now sold out.

Spectrum/Jessamine "A Fox on You" (Orbit003CD) CD only.



Various Artists "The New Atlantis" (Orbit004CD) Mid-price Space Age compilation featuring Boverly Electric, Jessamine, E.A.R., Spacemen 3 and Spectrum.



E.A.R. "Phenomena 256" (Orbit005CD/LP) Available on CD and gatefold double vinyl.



Octal "Octal" (Orbit007CD) Octal is the alter ego of Jeff Reilly from Magnon. CD only.



Spectrum "Forever Alien" (Orbit008CD/LP) Latest album from Spectrum available on CD and gatefold double vinyl pack. Last few copies of limited edition glitter yellow vinyl available by mail order only.



Spectrum "Feels Like I'm Slipping Away" (Orbit010CD) CD mini-album only.



Also available soon:

Spectrum and Imajinary Friends have a split mini-album due for release in March (Orbit017CD). Also new full length albums from Skyray "Womb" (Orbit018CD) and Longstone "Auto/Genous" (Orbit021CD) for release shortly.

There is also a Peter Dinklage retrospective underway and a Space Age sampler CD due for release late spring.

# sound check

In the thick of it: March's selected albums and 12" s

## reviews a-z

- **Natacha Atlas**
- **Autechre**
- **Tim Berne**
- **Boards Of Canada**
- **Black Dog**
- **Bluepoint**
- **Boredoms**
- **Vindios Cantabria**
- **Nulny Diabete**
- **Dixie Styler**
- **Kenn Kicker**
- **The Fall**
- **Four Tet**
- **Funk! Purcell**
- **Gas**
- **Darül Grubis**
- **Gry**
- **Koji Haino & BÖRIS**
- **Kelji Haino/Greg Cohen/Joey Baron**
- **Lat Mos?**
- **Matmos**
- **Monobake**
- **Gene Moore**
- **Thurston Moore/Evan Parker/Walter Prati**
- **Madlungauze**
- **T-A Düsseldorf**
- **Pan Sonic**
- **Van Dyke Parks**
- **Public Image Ltd**
- **The Rostman Vs Madlungauze**
- **José Serrano & Antonio "El Agujeta"**
- **Spectrum & Silver Apples**
- **Speedcrash & Jammy Noise**
- **DJ Spooky**
- **David Sylvian**
- **Nika Valdivia/Pita/Cheremagne**
- **Palästine**
- **Stephen Vitiello**
- **Robert Wyatt**
- **Otomo Yoshihide & Sachiko M**

In Brief reviews: avant rock, classical, critical beats, electronics, jazz, outer limits and new compilations

### Natacha Atlas

Geidiob

WARNER BROS. 10114 (R)

Natacha Atlas sings chiefly in Arabic and French, with a bias towards Tunisian and Turkish inflections. If Liz Fraser had been brought up in the Middle East, this is how she might sound. Geidiob attempts an Arabic/Asian crossover, atop dance and dub rhythms, while tubas and ouds come out Bollywood-like soundtracks for couples playing peek-a-boo amid the trees. Romany voices and string arrangements add the occasional majestic touch, as on "Ezzy" which comes on like a speeded up Slavonic dance. Elsewhere, dark, downtempo beats are lightened by persuasive riffs dubbed into the mix, alongside the odd sequenced bass drage lifted from David Cain Dance. Like that group Atlas operates along the Occidental fringes of World Music, but Geidiob aspires with DCD's purist approach, embellishing traditional arrangements with a drum 'n' bass kick, a swift tap or vocal treatment. For the most part Geidiob looks East, and bouzouki evoke sultry evenings and red skies on "Bakel". "Kilayla" is an Asian lament. But the West musics is on the first track: "One Brief Moment" on the back of David Arnold's movie-like orchestration.

VLM/PIRE PAVLE HIC

### Autechre

Peel Session

WARP WAP112 CD 12"

### Boards Of Canada

Peel Session

WARP WAP114 CD 12"

### Black Dog

Peel Session

WARP WAP115 CD 12"

Autechre's three-track Peel Session dates from October 1995, still their most remarkable year, what with the *Amel Vapre* EP and *In Repente* album extending and consolidating the most captivating facets of their music: "Mik Uik" and "Druine" are excellent examples of Autechre's innovative approach to out-of-synch tempos, rhythmic layering and sonic accretion. If "Inuke 2" feels sort of Autechre's best, the use of vocal samples indicates an awareness of more commercial routes, showing they don't operate entirely out on a limb. Boards Of Canada's session from July 1998, reprises "Aquarium" and "Disson" from their debut album, alongside one excellent

original, "Happy Cycling". In classic Peel show style, it is primarily of interest for its rediscovery of the creative urgency that is the first victim of a group whose signing has given them resources for multitasking and multiple takes. Unlike Autechre and Black Dog, wherein interest lies primarily in the ever-evolving merging of parallel streams of innovation, the Boards are much more pop in spirit. Their integration of sampled children's voices in "Aquarium" sparks off a collective susceptibility to the warmth of inspired memory. If the realisation is less seamless here, it reveals some humanity at the interstices of programs and samples.

The Black Dog session was recorded in December 1994, and is most interesting for "Pycosym", in which the trio re-work "Pist-Coyan" from that year's *Spanners* album. The quartet of originals that make up the bulk of the session might constitute a generous introduction to the Black Dog sound before the flood doors deflected, but in the company they also seem rather inconsequential. Black Dog sometimes verge on Orb territory without ever quite committing themselves to the first unselfconscious leap into dreamy inner landscapes. They often tread a middle road that promises to take them nowhere special. The superb 1996 album *Musik For Adverts (And Short Films)* was the one notable exception, where everything they promised came gloriously into focus. But these Peel tracks date back to earlier days, when their incision was decisive.

TRI OWEN

### Tim Berne

The Exempt Box

SCHWENK SCHWENK/TOOBY SALO

It's difficult to believe that Tim Berne once said he found New York musicians too aggressive. He must have been referring to their social demeanor, because this boy from Syracuse wasn't the type to get lazed by musical intensity — a quality he's not exactly short on himself. Like Alex Cox's *Repo Man* he seems to have sought out tense situations — for example, he participated in John Zorn's *Dmitri Gorkman* tribute project, *Spy Vs Spy* which gave late opportunity for relaxing, while nothing he's done would pass for dinner jazz.

A late starter — he took up the alto sax at 19 — Berne studied with Anthony Braxton and Julius Hemphill before setting up Empire Records to release his first four albums. The selected set contains them all: *The Five Year Plan* (1979), *7x* (1980), *Spectres* (1981) and the two disc *Songs And Albums In Real Time*

(1981). The first two albums were cut in Los Angeles, but by 1981 he had evidently decided he could handle that New York attitude. *Spectre* was recorded in Brooklyn.

If the solos have always been the most enjoyable things on Berne's records, this is not in any way to discount the importance of the writing. He has produced a number of stimulating compositions, and there is always a very strong orchestral aspect to his albums. He has spoken of wanting to encourage improvisations that do not sound as if they could have been produced in response to just any piece of music. His sense of structure is evident throughout these sessions, as is his ear for texture and atmosphere. A prime example is the title track of *Spectres*, which contains some remarkable yet subtle instrumental effects, especially from James Harvey's trombone and Alex Cline's percussion, and some superb ensemble colourings from Ed Schuller (bass), Dai Dor (cornet) and Berne himself.

Berne's own playing is strongly appealing, although he is generally given more credit as a composer and catalyst. He is an exciting improviser, and the changes that he rings in his alto intention as much as his ensemble writing are admirable. Again *Spectres* provides a useful illustration, the almost ethereal purity of the sound he achieves in the closing stages contrasting with his customary incisive tone. There are echoes of Albert Ayler, Ornette Coleman, Jackie McLean and Hemphill particularly in his coruscating playing on *The Five Year Plan* and on *7x*, where his tone tends to be less acid, but has the punch of the hard bop revolution.

The debut album opened with a tribute to Hemphill, an impressive two workout called "The Gasco Cowboy". Some idea of the range of Berne's musical vision could be measured by the immediate contrast of the following track, "AK Wadud", a meticulous, probing 14 minute composition with a chamber



## soundcheck

music flavor and some delicate timbral investigations by John Carter and Vinny Golia on reeds and flutes. By the time of *Songs And Rituals* the group had shrunk to a quartet comprising Schwler, Mack Goldsbury on tenor and fullthroated soprano, and Paul Molan on drums, but the sound was impressively large and the architecture of the compositions had ambitious, beyond-means improving frameworks.

Unwilling to keep bandleaders and industry execs sweet until his chance came, Bernie always made his own opportunities. This handsome ressurge on his current self-run label, Screwgun, proves his faith in himself was well founded from the start.

**BARRY WITHERDEN**

"Tarafra Mouzo" which combines drive and laziness as elegantly as any record since Manuel Gotsching's 62-64, and has the added bonus of a call and response passage to die for. Other highlights include the Pejorative Mile track and the surefire groove and teetering guitar solo of "Mouzo Dye." Ngbo occasionally degenerates into faceless funkier poses and lingering optimism, but its blend of past and present has many lessons to teach the West's musical journeyers.

**PETER SHAPIRO**

### Divine Styler

Wordpower 2, Earshotzox  
JAZZ RECORDINGS (BX) 7132 03

In the ten years that have passed since Divine Styler recorded the original Wordpower for Ice T's Rhyme Syndicate label, he has done little to resuscitate the excitement it and the single trailer, "Ain't Saying Nothing" generated among the HoHoos cognoscenti. In the 90s, he has barely surfaced with only an intellectual follow up, *Spirit Walls*, and an ill-advised liaison with House Of Pain to speak about. But Wordpower 2 sees him exploring with renewed vigor the same interface between the conscious and the abstract that made his debut so memorable. He combines the righteous focus of Rakim with the restless free association of Koolhaas to generate a taut, yet compelling flow of words.

Although the opening call to prayer of "Al-Ahdu" makes the album's Islamic thrust clear from the start, its pivotal track is "Before Mecca" which is his paean to renewed faith. But being a believer doesn't restrict his language to joyless religious legislation. His language is densely wrought, seemingly compressed between the conflicting demands of his belief and his imagination, and then warped and twisted through numerological and cabalistic processes into strange, fractured incantations. Moments of sparse longing buttress only follow passages that are impossibly opaque. Indeed, the difficulties of his links are acknowledged by the fact that the entire inner sleeve is taken up with a line by line translation of "Before Mecca."

Of course, grappling with lines such as "No Christ or Confucius who God in diamonds could set the net up to catch the jewels from these bolts of beam" is something of an acquired taste. But Wordpower 2 handsomely compensates anyone whose patience is stretched thin by extended bouts of declamatory mysticism. For one, Divine Styler navigates the tangled syntax of his language with sure-forged ease. His delivery is immaculate. Then there's the music. Though it is stripped down to essentials, it abounds with imaginative touches, and hums with unrelenting tension. A lone cello whiles purrulates, "The Self Dwell," a fluttering drone also, "Make It Bury," and sharp slices of metal distortion resonate through "Mico-phoned" generating an atmosphere charged with understated menace.

### Nainy Diabate

Nana  
SIPAS STONES CD

Don't let either the tenth wishes on the first track or the exotic phrases on the back cover fool you into thinking that this is another one of those gaudy fusions of North and South loved by French studio hacks and African sophisticates.

While Ngbo follows the trend for the galling rhythms and slick production of soul that has swept the African continent since Congolese soukous first appended the Caribbean style to its crystalline guitars, the trappings of modernity here remain firmly in the service of the centuries old Manding tradition.

Malian singer Nainy Diabate is one of the founders of this style, called *Mande zouk*, yet she is virtually unknown in the West. This is her first international release, even as she has long been a mainstay with the cassette vendors of Bamako and Mopti. Her cassettes, *RPM* (1987) and *Pandora Mouzo* (1992), remain some of Mali's biggest hits this side of Oumou Sangaré, establishing her as one of the country's pre-eminent artists.

With a voice that is more piercing and astringent than other great Malian singers, like Sangaré or Am Koko, Nainy Diabate is perhaps an acquired taste, but it's the music you'll keep coming back for. Ngbo features a remake of her great hit

## soundcheck

At the end of the album, the tension is seriously released with a few simple, heartfelt phrases, spoken languidly over an acoustic guitar: "It's a gift of love, and there is none greater, because it's a gift of love from the Creator."  
**CHRIS SHARP**

### Hanns Eisler

The Hollywood Songbook

DECCA 46582 CD

A student of Schoenberg, Hanns Eisler is best known for his songs for the masses of the 1930s, and his role as officially endorsed composer of EMI Germany in the 50s and 60s. He was twice exiled: he sought refuge from Nazi Germany in America in 1937, only to be bounced out by McCarthy's witch hunt in 1948.

The songs in *The Hollywood Songbook* completed in 1943, express the artist's isolation in exile—Eisler wound up in Hollywood like many other German and Austrian writers and composers (like it among them, whose Hollywood lyrics are mostly the angry, despairing poems he wrote between 1938-40). The title refers to the clash between Hollywood's culture industry and the art song tradition. The paradoxes of a politically committed composer caught up in the uprisings of Nazism and McCarthyism are mythologized. Eisler was surely the model of a "political composer" yet when he was interrogated by McCarthy's Committee on Un-American Activities, his arguments that as a composer he could not be political proved hard to refute. He was deported all the same.

The overriding irony of *The Hollywood Songbook* is that its intensely political messages are sublimated in some of the most beautiful art songs of the century—a form Eisler had apparently rediscovered as early as 1927. In the West at least, this art the well known Eisler. The musical climate, neither socialist or cabaret, but late Romantic. The recording by Matthias Goerne, with Eric Schneider on piano in Decca's Entente Music series, is one of the finest in the series in its advocacy of a neglected masterwork.

Eisler never heard a single performance of *Hollywood Songbook* and, perhaps because he chose to live in the formerly communist East Germany, Western recordings have been rare. When you hear Goerne's magnificent interpretation, this seems amazing. If there was ever a defence of a conservatory approach to the Eisler/Brecht repertoire, it's found here. Goerne's voice is beautiful, but the intensity of his expression means the material is not completely tamed and subdued. From the haunting "Der Sohn" to the utterly bleak "On Suicide," the songs chronicle Brecht and Eisler's horror at what was happening in Germany, their exile in Hollywood, and their thoughts on the future of their country. If you think of leader as an alien art form, this recording will make you think again.

**ANDY HAMILTON**

### Boredoms

Super ae

REDUPAN BHS019 CD

### Boredoms

Super Roots 7

AKAWEA WPC5820 CD

What a hero Yamantaka Eye has become! Maybe even a superhero: Super Eye, the eye that stared at the sun, training itself to see extra colours. He's led Boredoms from being a goofy live spectacle that made deeply peculiar records, to their current state as a phenomenally intense trance-rock group who are still playing with a deck entirely their own. Super ae is the least "difficult" of their records: seven very long pieces (the shortest is 30 minutes and the three longest go over 1.2 minutes apiece), with passages that wouldn't be too out of place on *Psychédélic Underground* or even *The Who's Tommy*.

No longer wreaking overt havoc, Boredoms join hands and chant, rocking as a form of meditation, trying to call down demons and brighten the sun. (Indeed, the few words that can be made out seem to be about sun worship.) Their attention spans have gone from infinitesimal to infinite. Yet the new album reveals points of continuity with their past work. You can hear *Chocolate Synthesizer* motifs snake-charmed out of chaos, the timeless riff extension of *Super Roots 3*, the pastiching and spoofing of electronic rhythms and textures from *Super Roots 6*. They even revisit a few old tunes. "Super Coming", in particular, is a much more fully realised version of "Hologram" from 1993's *Wow2*.

But here's why *Super ae* is such a great rock record. Those earlier Boredoms discs exposed their giant box of bizarre tools to the world, inverting and knotting rock paradigms to make them yield surfaces never used before. This time, the group uses those tools to build fully realised compositions. Heard from a distance, they rock like a Mack truck, the more you pay attention to them, the clearer it gets that they are constructed from squalling weirdness and far out experimentation. The album's centerpiece is "Super Going", a mutating riff that blooms anew every few seconds, like a fireworks display. It's a fantastically intricate piece of tapework, peppered everywhere with transparent and opaque edits, treatments and freaky mix details. "Super Good" ends the album with a fluttering, chiming meditation,



beautiful in a way Boredoms have never been before. It would make a perfect climax to their career: a final ascent into the sun.

Thankfully, it is not. It's already been followed by *Super Roots 7*, a 30 minute plus fantasia on the chords from *The Mekons*' second single "Where Were You?", which foregoes the "grawias" of *Super ae* in favour of sounding like they are gagging their heads off. Surrounded by two shorter, cantankerous remakes, the central "7" is both a majestic tower of rock and a berserk Boretronic parody of it. Nobody gets to strike a power pose without losing their chord to the other speaker, or a howling vacuum cleaner. At the start, at least, they've got that walloping Mekons riff to play with. They keep climbing into its immense crest before hurling themselves back down. This goes on for six minutes or so, before they fly off the last peak and straight into an ecstatic, single note motorik groove, with all three drummers keeping the doctrine beat and Eye swabbing the whole thing in candy coloured electronic squeals. It's Newt's "Hailogalo" swirled in war paint, flying down the Autobahn, out of its fucking skull on the vapours of melted down Pere Ubu records. After a little while, they swerve back into the "Where Were You?" riff, still chasing down that motorik pulse. And all of a sudden, somebody hits the gas, hard, and they doubletime it, with their amps spewing sparks, pounding away at the drone until the mix bursts into flame.

Finally, there's a mop up, with a slow, psyched out burp-and-slap beat giving way to bird and insect noises and analogue synth skitters. It's a hoot, and the best part is that they toss it off like it's no big deal. Once you fly that close to the sun, you know your wings aren't made of wax.

**DOUGLAS WOLF**

### The Fall

The Peel Sessions

SHANEDAVE SHS0004 CD

Since the last Fall album reviewed in these pages, the Cog Sister release of *Live To Air* in Melbourne 82 is issue 174. Four more discs have been added, or re-added with amendments, to what was already a labyrinthine library of work.

The appearance on Cog Sister of *Live Various* (Pylon and Live Nottingham 92) deepened the suspicion that every live show The Fall ever gave has been caught on tape, and that sooner or later, those tapes will find

their way onto CD. Packages unintentionally like bootlegs, both records contained far-to-middling transcripts of far-to-brilliant performances. But like bootlegs, they must be of interest only to those for whom ownership of each Fall document that emerges is a necessity, and it contains some scraps of hitherto secret information that might illuminate the work of the most enigmatic of bands.

Then came reissues on Cade: *Communications of 1980's Grotzque* (After The Grammar) and 1983's *Perverised By Language* (which had already been re-released only months before by Cog Sister). Both volumes were appended with their

contemporaneous singles, and in the case of *Perverised By Language*, a previously unissued track. The sound on Grotzque was incredibly muddy, even compared to Cade's earlier reissue of the same record, but whatever, these were two of The Fall's most blasted documents. Compared to other records of the period, they still sound utterly vital, the products of a soulless aesthetic so odd, so singular, that the music appears untamed, even as Mark E. Smith's lyrics lie encrypted reports on the grotzqueries of the albums' respective times.

All of which brings us up to date, live-wise, and to the long-awaited appearance of *The Peel Sessions*. The CD was compiled by bassist Steve



Hanley, and the packaging features art brut cover sketches by guitarist Tommy Crooks, but both are now ex-members of The Fall, having walked out of the group during its disastrous 1999 American tour. The sequence fits one track recorded for John Peel's radio show between 1993-95. Recorded without hesitancy it is that the tracks which The Fall recorded live in one take at the BBC's Maida Vale studios are superior to the official versions, which would inevitably appear on record a few months after the BBC tracks had been aired. As for all the tracks here are concerned, that rule of thumb only really holds good for the versions of "Smile," "What You Need" and "Attitude Cured," which all burn with a withering intensity. The versions of "Winter" and "Zwei" sound like penultimate drafts, while the bulk of the remaining tracks appear more or less identical to the official versions. (The Fall was never a group to mask the peculiarities or glitches in its sound with the bombast of some of the more docile.) Listening to these tracks read for their later versions, you get the impression that once the die was cast there was little scope for deviation, as the music was destined to be reproduced via an archaic, unforgiving process such as hot metal. Either that, or Mark E. Smith ensured the group stayed true to the instruction he hurled at them during 1980's "Skates, Slaps, Etc." "Stop improvising for Christies!"

The CD also provides a ported self-commentary on The Fall's progress, from the sleeky anguishes of 1978's "Mess Of My" to 1993's "A Past Good Place," which overloads with post-Acad/Machinist electronics. And at the centre of it all, that voice, blurring over the years, the grain slipping from punk-sneer to drunk-slar, but always serving as the portal on a mind that has stayed as sharp as a laser.

By the time you read this, Cog Sinister will have released the group's 1978 album *Dragnet*, and two new singles will have appeared, as being the first by the latest line-up of The Fall, the other credited to Inch, the doomed collaboration between Smith and Manchester producer Ken Stewart and Simon Spencer (aka Dose). The shelves in the library begin to slip and creek.

TONY HERRINGTON

## Four Tet

Dialogue  
OUTRIP 0021 CD2

In principle, I'm all for Frägs eclectic, experimental attitude, but their quality control has always been seriously wayward, meaning much of their output is plagued by boredom, botched experiments and pale imitation. They seem to be perennial underachievers.

Frägs's Kerian Hebden is solo mode as his first major release, *Thyself/Thyself*, was one of last year's best. A sublime, sprawling post-rock epic, it interlarded sequenced electronics and interfaced sequenced overdubs (dub detectors), sprawling *Movie-tone* style

damned to staggering effect. It was by far the more fruitful route for its author to pursue *Dialogue* shifts to shortened, fully rounded songforms. It is a first, simple based synthesis of Krautrock, Big Beat and Ambient exotica, scored through with the deconstructed scrabbles of dub and jazz. Sampled and layered noise and sound effects ripple and drift viscously across each other. Weather Report-style bass runs flex modulate. Busting rhythms build beside pitch, bangy breaks.

On its best tracks, Hebden again deploys a strategy of narcotic domination: a dense interweaving of sampled textures and freedom motifs, overlapping washes of sound melody and rhythm sucking the listener into the watery, black void of the cover. But Hebden fails to maintain such advances over the length of the album. "The Blatantly Effect" is a hideous, upbeat jazz funk workout, and tracks like "Minister" and "Crown" are flawed by the posturing of sample quotations which appear a whitey hippie "cool."

Written on for over a year, the album is carefully constructed, yet it seems to lack any genuine emotional depth, or any sense that the samples or songs are being truly pushed through for more coherent and arresting than Frägs. *Dialogue* is similarly inconclusive. After the achievements of *Thyself/Thyself*, it's a serious letdown.

DAVID HOWELL

## Funki Porcini

The Ultimately Empty Million  
Poussade  
MILK TUNE 20404 CD

At its best, the output of the Ninja Tune stable is a breath of fresh air, if only for its sense of mischief. Its Achilles' heel is its privileging of other-line-able interactive and visceral goals. The latest two got me into the position of relying on one or two innovators to prop up a roster of knowing copyists. If it takes itself as a 21st century manga Blue Note, it could well end up a swotty Tripfunk version of *Forcibly*.

(But Funki Porcini, aka James Braxel, is hardly *Spit Ambulance* with a computer. After a series of global adventures, which have included run-ins with The Residents and SPK, he brings something a little different to the party on the line *UP*.)

If he search for the perfect Quincy Jones style pop there's a predictable, albeit entertaining, theme: more going on behind the sampling than generic breakdown. He goes dreamy on the languorous swinging groove and melancholy bawl vapour of "Wilson's Millions", and gets wired with the bag band percussion and sunchy trumpet of "Tossers In LA". This peaks in the Barry Adamson rather than go away-also *Prophet* heads.

On "Rocket Star Music" a sinister, haunted organ drone and analogue twister struggle to keep up with the breakbeat spinning away from the groove. "English Country Jazz" is an odd, yet effective collage of anacronistic jazz

and pastoral sound effects. A witty, original record that rewards repeated listening.

FINE SMALL CRODS

## Gas

Kongsgaard  
MILK PLATAUX PICOX CS

The third instalment of Mike Ink's Gas project Kongsgaard continues the advances of last year's stunning *Zauberberg*, when in turn had doubled the darkness and density of his debut *Gas*. The album opens a space between the blurred textures of a post-rock unit like Labradford, and the minimalist Techno of Jeff Mills and Robert Hood.

While its rich, drawn out drones appear to be based on a looped series of samples, closer listening (it's essentially music for headphones) reveals a more amorphous, irrational flow. Moving through a series of minor key changes, layers of unrecognisable vapour noise (processed strings? Harp? Guitars? Synth noise?) shift and slide, drawing the listener through a series of irregular swells, eddies and underflows.

Closer listening also opens you to a wealth of subtle sound events. Surface fuzz, pops and crackles from Ink's rhythms, bass becomes a dark, ill-defined beat (impacting against the body as a bone-shaking rumble) (EQ'd to emerge low like a gun, the best functions as an unending metronome, around which big, bleeding states of bass dance, hooking the body into a euphoric at odds with the hovering mid-range. This kind of minimalism might not be a muted memory of the dancefloor, but a confused emotional charge dominates the album, which exists somewhere between a vague sense of dread and terrible beauty.

Picking up on the woodland imagery of the cover of *Zauberberg*, the eerie atmospheres of Kongsgaard's *Gas* Forest imply a mythical realm of dark woods and evil enchantments, consistent with much German art. The landscape is fraught with danger, even, a sense of foreboding. Moving through the forest in a state of unease, unbridled sounds clank around the listener, flickering at the edges of perception.

The filmic and massively ominous "Track 5" (as ever, all tracks are untitled) slowly drifts into a gorgeous, Chain Reaction style skunk. The bestless "Track 6" recalls Sora-era MBV, its tails of sound swelling into a rippling haze of mixed frequencies. Simultaneously spoken and enchanting, Kongsgaard provides a rich, visceral audio experience that is as awesome as the vast, ancient forests it evokes.

DAVID HOWELL

## David Grubbs

The CD-ROM  
RECTANGLE ALP

Since the saint of Get Set Set, David Grubbs is a mellow creature. After the Country-inflected minimalism of last year's *The Thicket*,

FCG & NSB present

# The NoMusic Festival

April 9 & 10, 1999  
London, Ontario, Canada

Fri. April 9  
Aeolian Hall, 8 PM:

Ken Vandermark/  
Fred Van Hove

Solmania  
Borbetomagus

Sat. April 10  
Aeolian Hall, 8 PM:

Alan Licht/  
Michael Snow

Jim O'Rourke/  
Jason Belchamber

Nihilist Spasm Band

Both nights in  
Forest City Gallery,  
10:30 PM:  
InterPlay

(all-artists improvising sessions,  
with special guests)

Advance tickets available by check or money  
order payable to Forest City Gallery,  
1795 Spadina St. London, ON N6M 5E1. Canada  
US \$45. \$50 each night.  
(Advance tickets only)  
No Festival Passes: \$30  
(all tickets and InterPlay, only 100 available)  
For information on ticket availability and  
accommodations contact:  
Forest City Gallery: 594-1444  
For more information on the No Music Festival  
visit: <http://www.no-musicfestival.com>

## THE NIHILIST SPASM BAND

New Album!

"Every Monday Night"

Listening Records AFCD-101  
All new songs and recordings!

"1984"

Listening Records AFCD-101  
Originally recorded in 1984!

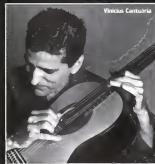
Re-issue of  
legendary cassette-tape stuff!

John Carter's Ferry Records has teamed  
with Listening Records to release this  
new CD, New Line, The Nihilist Spasm Band  
CD set available while stocks last. Forest City  
<http://www.forestcitygallery.com>

## No Music Box

Electronic Music Records EMI 101  
A CD set of 1988 No Music Box  
includes:

John Carter's Ferry Records has teamed  
with Listening Records to release this  
new CD, New Line, The Nihilist Spasm Band  
CD set available while stocks last. Forest City  
<http://www.forestcitygallery.com>



Vinícius Cantuária

# Vinícius Cantuária

Tucumã  
VERVE 531963 CD

When the early 60s bossa nova craze imploded, the after image gave little hope for recovery. If bossa endured, it seemed to do so as effete music for washed up swingers, too menopausal for rock and soul, too limp for the new thing in jazz. The *Tropicale* hybrids that followed may have sold less copies in the American suburbs, but their rich musical sources and overt politics were closer to the subject than bossa's soft trance of vicarious beachside pleasure.

Like all assaults on musical decadence, the stereotype buoyed the fans rather than offering useful insights into Brazilian music. Hindsight should allow us to admit that bossa nova, as composed by Tom Jobim and his peers, possessed an ease grace that disguised

complexity with its impeccably paced surface, a sublime expression of modernism murmuring the poetry of passenger jets and glass towers.

*Tropicale* and its offshoots reached great heights through the work of Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, Chico Buarque, Milton Nascimento, Tom Zé and Gal Costa, yet often foundered on its own eclecticism. Bitter to end up in a dead end hall of screaming rock guitars, medecine reggae or fusion.

Recording for Verve, the original home of bossa nova jazz, Vinícius Cantuária has to confront the task of convincing us that neo-bossa is not just the soundtrack to a Claude Lelouch one-valentine, transposed into the post-ironic, pre-millennial Lounge aesthetic du jour.

But that project belongs to a critic. If Cantuária cared more about his position in history and the now, he might have led off his album with a confrontation, perhaps choosing "Viva Isadoro Do Mundo", an Alceu Dias Lopes song that glides on air currents, desolate and weightless, short circuited yet perfectly counterbalanced by an Arto Lindsay guitar commentary that is brutal, tender, fumbling and masterful all at once.

Instead, he begins in the tradition, with "Amor Brasileiro" and "Maravilha", two songs as beautiful, gentle, romantic and musically as any detractor of bossa nova might expect. Peter Apfelbaum's tenor saxophone on "Maravilha" doesn't quite capture the bursary coze of Stan Getz, let alone his authority, yet the reference is still strong enough to send us back 37 years to "Desafinado" and "One Note Samba".

If Cantuária was content to leave it on that level, then this would be an album to be racked alongside something recent by Joao Bosco, schmalz-edged late night listening for the moment when your apocalyptic culture friends have gone to bed. But his association

with Manhattan's data stream visionaries and multi-genre virtuosi boils over in strange insectile stridulations at the periphery of songs, neurotic clock countermeasures and a sense of suspended animation that never allows complete relaxation.

The title track, "Tucumã", is a good example. Husled along by Joey Baron's drums, spiked by electrical sparks from Bill Frisell's guitar, the song resists these contrary motion impulses, instead hovering above the ground, frozen by the surges of a string quartet and Cantuária's hypnotic percussion.

Some of these songs have an air of magic realism about them, the hallucinatory clarity sharpened still further by odd details and subliminal movement. Cantuária likes to use contrast, the familiar knocking the unexpected off balance (or is it the other way around?) an elegant piece for string quartet, roughened at the edges by electronic bug sawing, the gorgeous dream narration of "Reinante", translated, simultaneously, like an inner whisper, by Laurie Anderson; Caetano Veloso's irresistible "João" trailing the faint scud of ghosts in its wake.

At a cross level, and this applies also to David Sylvian's *Dead Bees On A Coke* and Arto Lindsay's *Mundo Guitardo*, thank all the gods for evidence that songs about love can still be compelling and break new ground. Being a consummate craftsman, both as a composer and a player, Cantuária may be mistaken for a less interesting creature than he actually is. As misundstandings go, that's not such a bad thing for a musician, since it usually means more sales. The neo-bossa angle serves to confuse also (retro being monotonously unhelpful), but for those of you who swooned at the lush technicolour jitters and spurs of Arto's "Complicity", *Tucumã* will repay deep listening.

DAVID TOOP

The *Grosmont* places Grubbs in the company of French musicians from Queron Rollet's *Rectangle* stable. The title track is a 17 minute setting of Stephen Crane's short story, *The Blue Hotel*, which Grubbs apparently sketched out while writing for his plane to Paris. He might have made better use of improvisors of the calibre of Thierry Piazon, Yves Robert and Didier Petit had he spent more time on it.

It sets salient extracts from the original Crane story over a recurring melodic and harmonic refrain, which unlike its protagonist, resists the temptation to explode into violence. Grubbs's admiration for Philip Thompson's sentence "Every last cent you go with any music" is reflected both in his word setting and in his choice of The Red Krayolas's Stephen Pina to sing the narrative.

The *Ripside*, "Aux Nicotinales" is a drone-based composition featuring Grubbs on a plastic reed organ, along with discreet contributions from *Rectangle* house guitarist Noel Alchote. Alchote's normally dulcet guitar is confined here to sketching in the harmonic background to the unending,

variously pitched reed organ; his playing, recalling John McLaughlin's delicate arpeggios on Miles Davis's *A Silent Way*.

The *Grosmont* may not prove to be a milestone in Grubbs's expanding discography, but *Rectangle*'s limited edition, very early copy has already guaranteed its cult status as a collector's item.

DAN WARBURTON

# Gry Touch Of!

OUTRIGGER/IMPACT GEMMA 60195344 CD

Touch Of! is the result of an intriguing cross-cultural encounter between 22 year old Danish singer Gry Baggesen and the somewhat older En-Ensamble Nouveau machine manipulator FM Einheit. Gry's voice is an agile, transgressive force, veering between full throated Cabaret crooning and tremulous, yuletide yelps, as it stalks the brooding, deliberate soundscapes Einheit has constructed for it. And if her lyrics tend

towards the aimlessly symbolic, at least they marry well with a deliberate, fairly theatrical delivery, which disrupts her syntax and loads her words with unfamiliar stresses, disabbling attempts at specific interpretation.

Enheit is a master builder and throughout *Touch Of!* his architecture is solid, multi-layered and tangibly physical. Songs like the opening "Poles Apart" and the title track are propulsive excursions of sound, swelling to showstopping crescendos of electronically marshalled complexity. But his approach to mood is less subtle – while these constructions generate an impressive momentum, they sometimes have little more emotional impact than the incidental music of a TV drama. And although a less "touch" project than this would be hard to envisage, the sequenced rigour of the songs is occasionally reminiscent of Propaganda's *Faithful*, enhanced, mid-80s Teutonic take on Giorgio Moroder. A much needed lightness of touch materialises in the last half of the record when it taps into the atavistic spaces of the

Hard-European imagination by employing haunting waltz rhythms and tremulous guitar volms in "Perfume For Phantoms" and in the call and response chanting of "Old Raven". "Posidon" is even more suggestive, just a chilly vocal nestling alongside a lugubriously strummed base, wrapped in skeins of slowly oscillating feedback. It's a pity that its triumphantly minimal approach couldn't have been employed more liberally.

CHRIS SHARP

# Keiji Haino/Greg Cohen/Joey Baron

An Unclear Trail More Than Two AWAY WANDER CD

# Keiji Haino with BORIS Black: Imphaction Flooding

WORM 0250002 CD

It's always fascinating to catch King Haino, Tokyo's one-man New Music renaissance, in collaborative mode. While that all pervasive

air of Hano-ness is never totally surrendered, his interactions with other humans in real-time situations offer a brief glimpse behind the shades. These two widely divergent studio sessions showcase the breadth of his collaborative interests. Colby Cohen and Joey Baron should be familiar names to anyone who has ever dived into John Zorn's world: their bass/drums interplay in *Mesado alongside Zorn* and trumpeter Dave Douglas has been consistently impressive. Here Hano comes at them with nothing but aquatic guitar, a first for him outside of some minimal, hollow body on the 1996 Black Stage record. Hano has long been a fan of jazz guitarists Django Reinhardt, and the swinging 1930s atmosphere of Reinhardt's Hot Club Quintet is palpable when the trio really start to cook.

Hano starts away with any textural fluffing and instead rings out notes and little chord shapes. The group-mind really throbs, keeping the interplay solid and inspired throughout, with Baron joyously singing out warped bebop rhythms behind Cohen's slow-walking bass. Bizarrely enough, the more free-form sections resemble Bill Hagar's autistic guitar work on *Roll Trax*. It's almost like: Now there's a surprise.

**BORIS** (Ittrany typeset in a heavy Gothic font) are a young Tokyo power trio. With Hano, they create a heavy air, whose closest parallel, in terms of monolithic weight, is *The Melms* debut album. The tension rising out of Boris's haunting vocal and supercharged electric snarl box (which recall the minimal meditations of his *Njumei*), is slowly punctuated by Akuto's guitar, prompting a group collision that spills metallic lead guitar everywhere. It rocks in an almost straightforward manner and brings to mind the pro-Satan stupidity of the likes of Upside Down Cross. Electric Wizard and even Slayer, circa *South of Heaven*. When Hano eventually pans in on the guitar, mayhem seems seven tracks in, the music takes a more Faustian-like shape.

DAVID KEIRAN

## La! Neu?

Yeast Of The Tiger  
CAPTAIN TRIP CDJ124 CD

## La! Neu?

Cold Rain  
CAPTAIN TRIP CDJ125 CD

## 1-A Düsseldorf

Fat Lerner  
CAPTAIN TRIP CDJ160 CD

## Bluepoint

Underground In NYC  
CAPTAIN TRIP CDJ161 CD

"20 years of political angst has left a hole," said former rock master maestro Wim Wenders in the mid-'70s when asked about his fascination with American pop culture. "We covered it with chewing gum and Poloroids."

Growing up in the same post-war void as Wenders, Klaus Dinger — with brother Thomas never far behind — developed a parallel obsession with speed and motion. Recorded almost 30 years after he first took to the roads playing drums on Krautrock's debut album, Klaus's evocative *Yor Of The Tiger* reveals the speed rock veteran has never stopped moving. The man who helped swirl the influential motorpunk pose of Neu!, La Düsseldorf is at it still hurtling along the same Autobahn like a man on the run. But from what? In 1970 Klaus and his comrades were fired on the highly combustible fuel of growing up loving alien rock in a loveless fatherland. Hypnotized by constant motion, they transported themselves into an autonomous state of mind, inside which they could simultaneously escape from and reflect on the afflictions West German state they grew up in. Always on the run, they generated an emotional framework for dealing with the pre-1954 skeletons they drummed up from beneath the Autobahn's asphalt. That modern German culture is so stimulating is partly the legacy of the great occasional Krautrockers and film makers of the '70s.

But as ever, not all warriors can resist to victory. Too late to stop moving now, Klaus and co are the living Duchisms of German democracy, condemned to forever ride the endless Autobahns of their own imagining. Klaus and Thomas — drummer on *Yor 1975* and in *La Düsseldorf* — got themselves back on track under the benign patronage of Tokyo's Captain Trip label who funded Dinger's declaration of independence, not just as a recording studio, but also as a Disneyland state of mind. Does that make La! Neu? Klaus's Mickey Mouse ears? It is both the diabolically named group in which Dinger reprises his motorist trials of glory, and the logo which brands discs by favoured citizens of Dingerland.

Some horrible clapped out Krautstuff carries the La! Neu? brand. But whenever the snuff of sarcasm and gasoline transporter Klaus back into a little motorist revelry, as on *Yor Of The Tiger*, he can make music as magnificently moving as that of his '70s prime. Where he once drove his loud, speedy rhythmicks — essentially an electronically phased metronomic drum pattern — through a filthy industrial fog, Tiger runs on lead-free fuel through cleaner environs. In place of his shimmering olisks of electronic melody, a wordless female voice floats a melancholy mist above the asphalt. And though Klaus isn't on through to the other side, it taints the music with the ineffable sadness of recording time.

From here on the confusion sets in: Is *Yor Of The Neu?* of Gold Rain reissues. Klaus to a supporting drum and producer role behind regular singer Victoria Weymeyer and poet Reinhard Lenzki, who recast Dingerland as a 19th-century German dream world. Inside, a family serenely performs five finger exercises beneath a turbulent Caspar David Friedrich landscape. It's really OK.

1-A Düsseldorf is a duo featuring Thomas Dinger and his Kristiansen, between them playing guitar, drums and keyboards. Their strange, keening, wordless vocals suggest Popul Win in a more mystic drag. Finally, La! Neu? logo on the Bluepoint disc is essentially a misplaced endorsement of Horner Goebbel-style Hunsdale by a trio of vocal/instrumentalists whose glacial theatrical improvisations are nothing to feel snug about.

Infinitely inconsistent, the downside of Dingerland's state of constant motion is the motion sickness it induces. Enter here by all means, but make sure you have an exit visa.

NBA KDPF

## Matmos

The West  
DELLERMAQUE TERRAN CDJ121 LP

According to some gourmets, the culinary breakthrough everyone's waiting for is a dish that will evolve and change in flavour and intensity as you eat it — probably something like beans that sprout in wine sauce that turns to vinegar as you stare at it. Well, if Matmos's *The West* came out of the kitchen of Marco Pierre White, the revolution would be upon us. The four tracks on this mini masterpiece build and grow, accelerate and decelerate, change shapes and double back on themselves and crescendo in subdued outbursts of drum 'n' bass.

While there's still plenty of concern with process, the existing source sources of their previous work (ie contact-mimed crayfish nerve tissue) have been replaced by a sample library that allegedly includes Minor Threat, Enoch Light, Pendereck, Mandrill and pages of the Bible being turned. Whatever the veracity of that claim, one thing is clear: *The West* benefits from the specificity of live instruments and more reasonable sources.

As the title suggests, the occasional exorcisms of the long hairsonic sound of the Old West may inspired on by some records by Tortoise and Gaze. Do! Sol! put full exposure here. However, Matmos's Americana bears little relation to the alt-Country crap so beloved of editors of middle-age music rags. *"Sun On 5 At 152"* is a bit like a richly old saloon ranting before your eyes in time-lapse photography, while the 20-minute title track suggests a soundtrack between Speedy West, slack-key legend Sol Hoopii, John Cage's prepared piano, Louis and Bebe Barron, Jammer! Lint, Coltrane, Sly Stone and Newkidd, on a duty tread outside Roswell, New Mexico with UFOs flying overhead. However you want to read it — simply as a gorgeous play of textures or as a negotiation between roots and progress. Matmos's combination of bangers and slide guitars rubbing up against electronics has produced a striking record that fulfils the promise of recent post-side experimentation. It should satisfy even the most jaded of pillagers.

PEPER SHAPIRO



## SAM PREKOP - S/T

(MATERIAL SOUND)

Debut solo album from San And Calia Hoffman, aided by Jim D. Brown, Peter Frey, Josh Abrams and David Taylor



## ROKY ERICKSON - NEVER SAY GOODBYE

(CAPTAIN TRIP)

La slightly later recordings of never heard before songs, mostly from 1971 and 1974



## THURSTON MOORE - EVAN PARKER, PRATTI - THE PROMISE

(MATERIAL SOUND)

The electrifying of sound. A ritual, meeting



## JOHN ZORN - SONORA ZORN

(MATERIAL SOUND)

A book and CD dedicated to John Zorn. Previously combined tracks, interviews and photos

Available at all good record stores  
GREGG RECORDS  
ph: 0115 925 1232, fx: 0115 925 1227  
e-mail: info@greggrecords.co.uk



## Public Image Ltd

Plastic Box  
VISION 4000

### "Hello? Hello?"

Listening again to Public Image Ltd's debut single declaration is like finding a time capsule filled with nest adrenalin. None of the potency has been lost in the intervening 20 years: Jah Wobble's cattle prod bass takes up a rhythmic hammer home by a drum beat, John Lydon's querulous "Hello? Hello? Hello!", then the crashing cascading harmonics of Keith Levene's guitar, sounding like a new use for electricity. And that laugh... a delicious expression of malicious delight with which The Sex Pistols laded further into history.

Music seemed to have turned a corner in that moment, yet Public Image never really influenced anything much of value. Southern Death Cult and their ilk attempted to ape the sheer grandeur of Levene's guitar but ended up sounding overblown and pompous. Rehearsing the inspired *Metal Box* material included here, however, and you wonder whether PL's brutal reinvention of reggae got embedded in the consciousness of the nascent Massive Attack.

My recollection of PL's debut album is of a consolidation, and that's exactly the way it sounds here. You get to hear more of Levene's inspired noise sculpting on "Theme," but someone really should have dissuaded Lydon from turning the lyrics of "Religion" into a sermon-cum-poetry rant. They're actually quite good lyrics, if derivative of Peter

Hamill's "The Lie", but they'd be much more impressive if you heard them first with the music. The ghost of The Sex Pistols hangs around on "Religion" and "Low Life", a post-New York denunciation with Sid Vicious as its target. And the fractured R&B of Pere Ubu informs "Analysis", although the latter shows a development in Lydon's songwriting from rant to narrative. It was all great stuff, but never as devastating as the single had promised.

Devastation came next. At which point this reviewer vents his blind frustration on the compiler of this four CD box set, because for some inexplicable reason the group's masterpieces are included here in inferior versions culled from a 1979 John Peel session, in place of the originals from *Metal Box*.

*Metal Box* was the moment PL made good on the promise to really move music forward that was implicit in their first single. "Keith's guitar was just the best thing on God's earth at the time," Lydon says in sleevenotes. But Levene alone wasn't responsible for the huge leap from the Ubiquitous attack of the first album to *Metal Box*'s wild soundscapes. The whole conception had changed. It was like Horace Andy had been in an Autobahn crash with Can, leaving behind an intricately mangled metallic sculpture that managed the trick of appearing totally new while accurately getting down the mood of the times. "Careening" still sounds like a dive along the Thames to the backdrop of a poisonous sunset, as cranes gyrate above abandoned warehouses.

Lydon's songwriting had ascended to a new level too, with "Protophies", a chilling tale of a bizarre abduction, and the sensurround decay of "Careening" and the more poetic, invective of "Chant". The Peel versions are by no means bad in themselves. Indeed, its alternative take of "Careening" has a certain dynamic energy, and "Chant" makes up for its slightly dodgy production standard by scaling a new level of hysteria. They would have made valuable bonus tracks — it certainly wouldn't have hurt if the compilers had to cut back the later material to accommodate them — but substituting them for the originals is simply inexcusable.

PL had more than a few great moments through the rest of their career, but they never matched the sustained brilliance of *Metal Box* again. Wobble was gone and his bass was soon missed. Any single track from *Flowers Of Romance* is impressive in isolation for its array of percussion and the new Arabic influence, but Levene's powers were on the wane. Heard at a string, the album was repetitive.

The decline signalled by the shambles of *This Is What You Want* was arrested by 1986's *Album*. Produced by Bill Laswell, it seemed like a confident stop towards a new technologically modulated rock, even if Lydon's songwriting, now the group's solitary focus, lacked conviction and direction. He often found interesting musicians to work with, among them guitarist John McGeoch, ex of Magazine and The Banshees, inner-art eccentric multi-instrumentalist Lu Edmonds, and the superb drummer Bruce Smith, ex of The Pop Group, The Sits and Rip Rig & Panic, but he couldn't halt PL's slow slide into mewing self-parody.

Stop stop, start again

DON WATSON

## Monolake

Interstate  
MONOLAKE/INTERSTATE PL001 CD

Now they've been handed control of Intimolake, formerly Basic Channel's avant-garde label, Berlin's Monolake make a long-awaited return with an eight track album of lush, obscure, ultra-immersive soundscaping. Like its predecessor, Hong Kong, Interstate bears parent company Hard Wax's stamp of rich audio quality and skanking locomotive trajectories. Yet, having taken time out to sharpen their programming skills, the disc marks a major netto-biting of their earlier sound.

Upgrading and amouring itself with the digital precision and pinprick percussion of new edge electronica (Farmers Manual, Funkstörung, etc), Monolake resolute their earlier metronomic dubs through a micro-engineered forcefield awash with crisp and bustling particle activity.

The opening "Abundance" signposts the shift in stunning fashion, overlaying its sticky beats and fuzz waves with a sea swell of creeping activity. Buckling metal noise is stretched taut (Pineapple's springing con effect), well-worn banks puff up and exhale gaseous smears "Gecko" swirls into a riot of cactus, Geger clicks and warp-fade bass "Perpetuum" reviews 90s Electro, running off a pusily pulse and seesswing between a stuttering bass roll and a stretched out rehashing of "Abundance".

Like Zaha Hadid's dynamic architectonics, Monolake activate irregular angles, access unusual dimensions, send textures sliding across one another. Gleaming spaces are opened. Perspective shapes loom and roll ominously past as ghost objects. Interstate retains Monolake's penchant for mooring, aquatic dynamics, tagged by their water-sourced samples. However, it doesn't always serve them well. "Amasson" juts such samples alongside tinkering and artificial clutter to create a weedy, New Age Ambient backdrop, and "Terminal" veers haphazardly close to the synthetic, cyberside slickness of Juno Reactor or FSOL. Yet the shortcomings of these closing tracks are insignificant compared to the advances made across the rest of the album.

DAVID HOWELL

## Gene Moore

Carnival Of Souls OST  
BOSTON AREA 012 CD

The low budget dreamchild of Herk Harvey, who produced and directed the slow burning cult film classic back at the start of the 1960s, *Carnival Of Souls* is a disturbing study in black and white of a woman gradually losing touch with the world of the living. Set around the hulked remains of an abandoned beach house and amusement park located on a causeway stretching out into the Great Salt Lake, Harvey's film establishes itself somewhere between the stark physicality of its locations

and the ghostly sense of growing uncertainty that permeates them. What helps to hold this strange, troubled relationship together and animate its shifting unity of moods is Gene Moore's extraordinary organ music, lovingly recorded from the original acetates for this long-overdue album release.

Sometime John Clifford's slevereties reveal that exterior dialogue and dubbing had to be kept to a minimum, and that without Moore's own organ playing "almost 50 per cent of the film would be silent." His music was also a key part of the story. The female lead, portrayed with forlorn disquiet by Candice Hillgoss, is a professional organist engaged to play in a Utah Church. Despite having no deep religious convictions of her own, and with the rather spooky absence of any visible congregation, she browses intently over her keyboard, producing sounds that become increasingly uncertainly as the movie progresses. "Profane Sacrilege," the priest cries as her music mutates into spooky dissonance. "What are you playing in this church?" An unsettling blend of old-time hymns, key honore themes and swirling synth, arpeggios, it echoes exactly the decaying splendours of the haunted lun palace out on the salt flats.

Used in churches, ball parks, carnival tents and radio serials, the organ has always been central to modern American folklore. The *Carnival Of Souls* soundtrack acknowledges this primacy, looking back to its role as accompaniment to moving pictures before the use of the tollies, and forward to the use of Fats Waller's organ music in David Lynch's exploration of industrial gothic in *Eraserhead*. Snatches of dialogue, spectral sound effects and fragmented orchestral "interludes" are also included here to give an overall impression of the film's genuinely creepy atmosphere. However, it is the organ that predominates.

An added pleasure is the voice of Hank Henkel introducing the restored version of *Carnival Of Souls*. He may cite Bergman and Carducci as his influences, but he still comes over sounding more like William Castle, the showman king of the midnight spook pit. "You know," he intones gleefully "you have to be careful making a weird show, or watching a weird show. It may come back to haunt you." Amen to that.

KEVIN HOLLINGS

## Thurston Moore/Evan Parker/Walter Prati

The Promise  
HISTORICAL SOUNDS HPS00200006 CD

Documenting the further adventures of Thurston Moore in the Land of Improv. On The Promise the Sonic Youth guitarist teams up with Evan Parker and Walter Prati, two improvisers who have an intimate knowledge of each other's sonic vocabularies. Prati is one of a small number of sensitive soundmiths (Lawrence Cassella and Joel Ryan are

others) who Evan has encouraged to electronically deconstruct/reconstruct his compositions during real-time performance. Though this is the trio's first encounter, the *Promise* is unquestionably the work of a close-knit unit determined to put individual flair at the service of a collective sound, which is quickly arrived at on the opening couple of tracks, and seldom deviated from thereafter. Only the penultimate track (the last is a multimedia gadget, with its hacked-up cut-up speech, sounds a sour note. This is no way to approach the serious subject of explosive civil labour).

Otherwise it's an intriguing, drifting, sometimes accelerating sonic Mayno, where coils of guitar stretched and echo soprano sax chromaticisms, and Prati's intermittent electric bass-judder threatens to shake the carefully wrought tracery to pieces. His treatments of Parker's sax are almost imperceptibly, supplying an extra multilayered dimension to the swirling melodic lines. Events such as "the second part on 'Our Future'" as the two slide into a voluminous hail of murmuring sax and velectran bass. Moore's guitar is the first to snip out of it, with some characteristic whine "in grid metallica, while still keeping the collective shape in mind.

Some might find this music's overall restraint frustrating, others with time enough to ponder the finest details will be rewarded by a subtly addictive recording.

CHRIS BLACKFORD

## Muslinggauze

Re-Max Vol 2  
SOLUBLEPOON SOL78 CD

## Muslinggauze

Re-Max Vol 3  
STALPAUL MUSIC/PSI 00171 CD

## Muslinggauze

Azure Deix  
STALPAUL MUSIC/PSI 00187 CD

## Muslinggauze

Hussein Mahmood Jacob Tehar  
G888  
SOLUBLEPOON SOL78 CD

## The Rootsman Vs Muslinggauze

Return To The City Of Djinn  
THIRD EYE MUSIC TPE000014 CD

On 14 January, Muslinggauze's Bryn Jones died in Manchester, aged 38, from pneumonia following the contraction of a rare fungal blood disease. He was always a reclusive figure, happy to let his music speak for itself and for listeners to take whatever they wished from its politically inflected titles. One of the counterculture's most gnostic mavericks, he had apparently left *Stalpaul* enough material to carry on releasing new albums for another five years. No doubt Bryn would have hoped that the Palestinians finally

find justice before the music passes away too. Listening back to the forgettable drum machine and sample music of 1983's "Helen, Jegerisk", on the industrial compilation *Exophant: Table Album*, there is little sign of the distinctive clarity that would inform Jones's subsequent style. By the end of the 80s, above titles like *Lob* (with track titles like "Doud' Of Semer" and "Shroud Of Khomeni"), marked the beginning of his singleminded exploration of Arab influenced percussive trance states and rhythmic cut-ups. An initial revulsion at Israel's invasion of Lebanon prompted his unshakeable but undermonstrous support for other Islamic and Arab nations, particularly the Palestinian cause. His music is a vital reality take on its sources, a complete reconfiguration to suit his own tastes.

As with other fertile visionaries such as Herbol, there are too many releases for any reader to keep up with (and many of them are sound meant for the garage). If anything, the consistency of the output was a welcome guarantee that you could go on whenever you liked and come back with a reasonably representative set. For the fans who must have everything, limited editions like the *Re-Max* volumes keep them satisfied.

*Azure Deix* is perhaps the most representative of these recent releases, ranging from the head-banging dutescapes of "Devour" and "Sandstalker" through to the distorted rhythmic pounding of "Shahid Nian Royal Bajar". Some tracks even have a relaxed, funky feel to them. If you're not already a fan, it's a varied and rewarding sampler.

The drums and electronic warbling of "Nazareth Arab", from Hussein Mahmood Jacob Tehar Goss, aren't especially successful, and a valiant attempt to marry Techno and dub with the usual Muslinggauze sound on the same album's "Us Mahmood" also needs more results. Though it's certainly not the best album in the batch, one track, "Isanbu", impresses by switching away from a light reggae influence to what might be a damaged scratch recording of a singer from somewhere in Jones's virtual Middle East.

The influence of reggae was a feature of Jones's later productions, and the *Re-Max* volumes adopt it extensively. On these discs he removes his own material, combining methodical, pattern rhythms with the original tonality of his percussion often filtered beyond recognition, and adding occasional photographic static. Unlike too many faux ethnic Westerners, Jones rarely seemed constrained by weaknesses of authenticity or the need for glossy production values. Indeed, the cracks, distortion and hiss that surface here helped ground his music. Vol 3 also benefits from some tracks that further filter the Muslinggauze sound into something approximating a doggerel, like his loopy and, in one case, oddly excited whoops. The same whoops had already made an appearance on the marginally more adventurous Vol 2, reinforcing that element of

## N RECORDS The record label of EXPERIMENTAL INTERMEDIA



ANNEE LOCKWOOD  
RUTH ANDERSON  
Sinopah



EUANNE RADIGUE  
Trilogie de la Mort  
(3-CD set)



MALCOLM GOLDSTEIN  
The Seasons: Vermont



PAUL PANHUYZEN  
Paritas For Long Strings

## All titles available from Metamkin

50 Passage des Ateliers  
38140 Rives FRANCE  
33.4.76.65.27.73  
33.4.76.65.27.74 fax  
metamkin@compuserve.com

Please contact *N!*  
to receive a catalog

N! RECORDS  
PO Box 1754, Canal St. N.Y.  
New York, NY 10013 USA  
212.675.9629, 212.645.0298(r)  
N!Records@compuserve.com

**David Sylvian**  
Dead Bees On A Cake  
VIRGIN CDS2875 CD

It's no use looking back, of course. But as a prelude to welcoming the arrival of David Sylvian's best ever solo album (and his first since 1987), can I just say I miss that monastic singing style from the Japan period? I mean those virtuosic gulps and grainy vibratos that Sylvian deployed with such skill on tracks like "Swing" and the almost perfect cover of Smokey Robinson's "I Second That Emotion" (both 1980). The more absurdly rococo his styling became, the more I enjoyed it — it was funny for one thing, though I doubt that the members of Japan saw it that way. Since 1984's solo *Brilliant Trees*, Sylvian has favoured a mature, more sincere vocal approach as the vehicle for his ballads of spiritual search and often anguished introspection.

So the bad news on the new album is, no more Motown covers or trashy titles like "Adolescent Sun". The good news is that Sylvian seems to have attended lessons at the Tom Waits school of earthy production techniques, and got some grit into his sound. This comes mainly courtesy of Waits' guitarist Marc Ribot, a man with an inexhaustible supply of posed fifth on electric guitar or bary.

"Midnight Sun" is a barroom blues which apparently started life as a joke around a John Lee Hooker loop. The moody clattering and rough guitar are balanced against Reich's Gaster's brass arrangement, all swells and luxuriating harmonies. All this darkness turns out to be the perfect context for Sylvian's intense lyrics about reaching the light of spiritual peace.

This is an excellent musical track, and with additional help from Bill Friesel's guitar, Kenny Wheeler's fugehorn and Steve Jansen's drums, Sylvian pulls it off several more times during the album. The lengthy opener, "I Surrender", shimmers over Jansen's beautifully lazy shuffle. Here, Sylvian's very dark strings are pitted against Fender Rhodes piano and a low pitched flute, while Ribot grimaces through a wah-wah pedal.

All the ex-members of Japan seem to be perfectionists, who run over budget in a tireless search for pop nirvana. This can lead to overworked music which has been worried to death, or, as on much of this album, an astonishingly poised beauty and crafted sensuousness in the sound.



Sylvian

Sylvian is very good at painting a background to his tunes — strange passing events and shifting washes are conjured from samples and synths, and give three dimensional depth to a song like "Alphabet Angel".

Sylvian is currently based in California, and appears to have found personal contentment through a series of spiritual teachers. One of the last tracks is a simple Indian hymn sung by the guru Shree Maa, accompanied by Sylvian's cascading guitar. His own songs are in a kind of devotional tradition, by which I mean that surrender to a lover or to a deity are equivalent to each other. An example: "It's all in the way she moves/The grace and the light that will see me through." This is from the swaying five-time of "Kishina Blue", adorned by the tablas and Indian flute of Talvin Singh and Deepak Ram.

I can't always get involved with Sylvian's lyrics, particularly when the spiritual recruitment drive becomes a little too explicit. Such moments give me the image of a smiling vicar encouraging new members into the Bible study group. Other times the lyric writing is simply boring. "Taking one day at a time" is a line crying out for the red pencil.

Still, welcome back David Sylvian. The record is a sophisticated, contented collection, but also the hard won result of a musical struggle. Shame there's no more eyeliner and adolescent squinting, but there's still sex in that grainy voice, and this new glam R&B will do just fine.

CLIVE BELL

**Pan Sonic**  
A

WIKI/9498 R10/CD

The material of Pan Sonic has been brooding, the rawness of somewhat the sumptuous method was massage of pure sine, the error sounds of control and broken contact that are usually stoned by a quick dash for the volume control.

Although they operate in similar areas to the austere Japanese school of sound phenomena artists recording for the Wk label (Minoru Sato Atsushi Tominaga) their work is less conceptual, more organised, more musical if we can use that word. If there is a

school of electronic physicality it should also include Plastikman, The Sawdust, Michael Prime and Taper — Wk at one extreme. Taper at the other, with Pan Sonic somewhere in the middle. Inevitably you listen for signs of refinement or romanticism simply because the music goes beyond process and phenomenology, broadcasting a manifesto for the poetry of electricity. Possibly elements of romanticism may be attributed by the listener without the approval of Pan Sonic.

Comparing a few of their 1996 album *Kulma*, or *Vieno* from 1995. I can hear more reverberation I can hear a sculptural depth within individual sounds. I can hear more drama

Design, or perhaps because of their nakedness as sound sculptures (without visible objects), each track suggests and images scenes, moods. I try to listen and see nothing but the sounds become forms, vapour trails, LEDs, lightbulbs close to death, tiny windows opening and closing in cement walls, sheets of lead unrolling in underground car parks. That's the closest I can come to nothingness.

The final track, "Vieno", is two and three layers of buzzing drones, an extruded "Last Post", backed by beats that seem, despite their relative quietness, to crash and boom with menace. Whenever I listen I'm reminded of the thunderous beats and raw scratches of Marley Marl's early productions.

"Lomantia" is the bare sound of a Roland BOB drum machine sounding the way it sounds when you switch it on and press play the simple beats moving in unison with pulses that seem to shift but actually stay still like VJ optical art, but sound.

Some tracks fade away into lengthy silence. Like being dropped in an escapee and left to survive. Series truly alert.

DAVID TOOP

**Van Dyke Parks**  
Song Cycle

HYPOCENSIC RCD10452 CD

**Van Dyke Parks**  
Discover America

HYPOCENSIC RCD10453 CD

**Van Dyke Parks**

The Clang Of The Yankee Reapier  
HYPOCENSIC RCD10454 CD

"I was there. I inhabited. Yet, only I do romance. Irides fade away into lengthy silence. Like being dropped in an escapee and left to survive. Series truly alert."

"I was there. I inhabited. Yet, only I do romance. Irides fade away into lengthy silence. Like being dropped in an escapee and left to survive. Series truly alert."

"I was there. I inhabited. Yet, only I do romance. Irides fade away into lengthy silence. Like being dropped in an escapee and left to survive. Series truly alert."

Boat and even drug-added though some of his music may be, Parks is at all about the taste between continuity and fresh influence in American popular music. His low for the 30s and 40s for Gershwin and Cole Porter, leads straight into his writing. As an arranger, he cites his influences as Brian Wilson, Percy Grainger and Esquivel. His passion for the traditional styles led to his best solo work. Interviewed in *The Wire*, 163, he identified this as his favourite music, "Lord Kitchener" for my money is as good as Schubert." There are six Van Dyke Parks albums including his 1995 *Orange Crate Art* collaboration with Brian Wilson. Now Rykodisc have reassessed the first three at mid-price, with an extra track on each. *Song Cycle* appeared in 1967, in the formative wake of *Pet Sounds* and *Sgt Pepper*.

interchangeability in his work, where similar rhythms, sounds and textures recur.

Fortunately, Jones's willingness to depart from the formula kept things interesting even when the studio stream of releases became a torrent. Return to the City Of Dawn takes him much closer to the dancefloor: the conch rhythm loops augmented with hip quaking basslines, or speed up drum 'n' bass style. While it loses a lot of Halmay's dissonance, it still ends up sounding like little else, and tracks like "Tutaz" and "Estahant" drivel ahead at an invigorating speed. Along with *Azure Dew*, it's the pick of a batch of releases that have now, sadly, become memorials.

BRIAN DUGAN

Strange times, and a very strange album highly rated by many cognosceri. "Warner Bros thought they'd just bought the Elephant Man," recalls Parks. A dense and glorious jungle of colour, the arrangements on its short songs push the studio to its limits.

Fireworks, steam trains and thunderstorms take canine roles and the elephant roars of the French horn, melancholy harmonica melodies and odd splashes of façe manipulation. Parks sings in a sweetly unstable voice, recalling the high-pitched melismas of his contemporary The Incredible String Band's Robin Williamson. Several tracks, including a cover of Donovan's 'Colours', are like miniature satires, changing course abruptly several times in a few minutes. They recall Duke Ellington's highly comic *Apartment Suite*. The use of echo makes the voice even more unstable — the clarity of the CD format, plus headphones, help to illuminate what's going on in this realm of ideas.

For *Discover America* (1971) Parks found a new perspective by positioning himself in the Caribbean and looking back at America through calypso tinted glasses. This is a sequence of seductive melodies in praise of Bob Crosby and steelbands. Languid calypsos tell how Franklin D. Roosevelt visited Trinidad, and "Princess Margaret say come Tobago for play." "The Stars and Stripes Forever" is played by a lone steelband in full carnival form. Parks has discovered the power of taking elements out of the mas, and a wonderful lusciousness/looseness in rhythm and colour. Strings and brass are delicate and playful. The crooners' backing vocals over the top of the deployment of the mas are mixed in front of Parks' closed loud speakers. Several times we hear the backing vocalists chucking and commenting on the songs, unaware they are being recorded. One of my personal *Discover America* discs, without question

Parla's Caribbean project continues on *The Clong Of The Yankee Reeper* (1976). "Tribute To Spence" is in praise of Winston Spence, inventor of the steel pan in 1939. "Pess That Stage" is a calypso sermon against impotency. A lot of *Discover America's* charm is still there, and the album concludes with a fabulously upbeat rendition of "Amazing Grace." But whereas the other two albums feel intimate, this

one is large scale, rather like a stage show full of colourful dancers and whirling skirts. 'Love Is The Answer' is soul calypso, with punchy brass, steel pans and squaring synths. This is Parks at his most accessible, the beat is straightened out in a rock direction and the sound is much less disorienting.

It's odd how *Song Cycle* can sound intimate in spite of being an arranger's phantasmagoria: it's as if it's all going on inside Parks's head. Discover America is the album that inspired Haruomi Hosono to produce his brilliant *Tropical Dandy*, in which Japan is rediscovered, by a Japanese, from an American perspective. Of these three albums, the first two are certainly cult classics.

## CLIVE BELL

José Serrano & Antonio 'El  
Agujetas'

Two Cries Of Freedom  
900 816 082-86 CD

Forget the castanets and dancing, the gypsies' most prized expression is *canto jondo* or deep song. Jose Soriano and Antonio El Aguafeta won a biennial singing competition staged in Spain's prisons. These held a disproportionate number of young gypsy males. The charges are usually drugs and petty crime. Gypsies are Spain's blacks, and *flamenco* is their blues. In March 1997 Soriano and Aguafeta cut this disc. The story of their arrival at the studio in chains is an update on *The Prisoners*, connects who sang so sweetly for Sam Phillips's Sun label in 1950/3.

Flamenco singing comes from belly and throat – hard, assertive, driven. Those who expect pretty harp strums from West African koras can be shocked by the ferocity of the accompanying vocals. There's some of that intensity here, along with the ecstatic throat song of such singers as Nordest Futeh Al Khan and Khalid. To these inept ears, Serrano is more Islamic and mellifluous, while Aguilera, son of the famous Aguilera De Jerez, sings it so hard and nasal he sounds like a raging obditer. They reach vocal extremes so far unrepined in pop or soul.

Shocking too is the rhythmic attack of guitar, foot stomps and hand claps (the prisoners

were supplied with flamenco's finest. Anyone craving advanced rhythms — whether that means some brainbusting randomness calling itself drum 'n' bass, Conlon Nanarrow's playful pangs, or Simon Fell's anachrony — will love this. Another avert connection: flamenco guitar, little unsustained mercilessly quick — is one source of Derek Bailey's anti-rockist timbre. Hard plucked arpeggios embellish the vocal core; roiling feathers about a knifesharp's gnarly throat.

Listening to songs if you can't understand the words might seem pointless. However **RÖIR** — which began as a cassette-only label in New Wave New York — has a penchant for politically charged material. This release (originally on Big Bang Records in Spain) is a step towards giving a marginalized underclass a public profile. Not that anti-gaypy feeling is merely a Serbian problem: Persecuted in Romania and Bosnia, pygmy refugees in Kent have become scapegoats here. On 1 October 1998, Nick Hudson, group editor of *Down Express*, ran an editorial saying: "We are left with the backdrop of a nation's human sewage and a nation to watch it down the drain." Taken up by the tabloids, the article resulted in attacks by the National Front to march on Dover under the banner "No room here. The myth of the scarcity of resources in a nation grooming with wealth appears to require such charities. Can music be of some reason?"

ROIR should be congratulated for releasing flamenco in an undiluted form, while providing information about the actual condition of its performance. Following their musical triumph, Semano and El Agujetas are out on provisional parole — "under electronic supervision."

REN WATSON

**Spectrum & Silver Apples**  
A Lake Of Teardrops

SPACE AGE RECORDINGS ORB016 CD

© 1998 Blackwell Publishers Ltd. *Journal of Internal Medicine* 243: 399–406

Given the current vogue for malfunctioning Moogs and patchily-soldered oscillators, this six-track union of the high priests of the cult of analogue resurrection will have the disciples in a tizzy. Whether anyone else will notice, however, is another matter entirely. *Unlike Beason, Silver Apples' 1958*

correlatibulum, which was hopelessly flat and sounded as if it was recorded in an analogue morgue, *A Lake Of Tears* has their collaboration with Spectrum 5 Some Bloom does at least have some drive, even if it doesn't exactly bring back their late '60s glory days. Tracks like the future-gothic "Streams Of Some" (which could be the title sequence of an industrial Light & Magic remake of *Phantom Of The Opera*) and the electro EST primal screaming of "If Don't Care If You Never Come Back," have some weight behind all the snowflakes and parabolas generated by their archaic machines.

It doesn't sit, though "Whirlwind" sounds like the BBC Radiofourish Workshops after they just broke up with their girlfriends, while "The Edge" scores a scene in which a morose Dr Who goes 20,000 leagues under the sea. When the electronics don't drag, Smeets's lyrics evoke a sub-Kerouac poetry slam in which no one is snapping their fingers in appreciation, they veer from hipster jive such as "You carelessly set my furt on fire and it's never be the same" to woefully pretentious alien abduction talk. It could be time for some de-programming.

PETER SHAPIRO

Speedranch & Jansky  
Noise

## Welcome To Exorcist

1998-1999

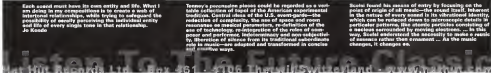
the wizard opens an Earth collapses  
told in on itself Explosions of digital noise A  
continuous ambush of ultra-abrasive  
intervals. Glass shards and splinters of  
burning steel sink through the mix. Predatory  
machines stalk the detritus. FX are suddenly  
deployed. Speeds jolt and sink miserably in a  
head-melting mess. Constructed through a  
process that rebuts the role of the QJ,  
Speedrunch and VMP's Janky Noise merge  
the use of turntables and CD) with the sonic  
and processing capabilities of the laptop  
computer. With no definable beginnings or  
endings, the 22 tracks of *Welcome to  
Eucosta* are told together into one long  
grinding messiahic composition from a mix  
of self-generated matter, environmental



Each word must have its own entity and life. What I am doing in my compositions is to create a web of interlarded relationships, while trying to safeguard the possibility of merely perceiving the individual entity and life of every single trace in that relationship.

[illegible]

Sachs found his means of entry by focusing on the point of origin of all music—the sound itself. Inherent in the nature of every sound is its vibrational identity, which can be reduced down to microscopic details in particular patterns, like atomic particles consisting of a nucleus surrounded by moving electrons. ... In this way, Sachs understood the necessity to make a music of masses rather than ornament ... As the music changes, it changes us.



# HIGHJACK YOUR BRAIN

## VANGUARD

by MEN AT ARMS (arch 97)

—contrasting the deeper side of the band's sound with the more aggressive side of their new album—about 11 tracks with 40



## ARCHITECTONICS

by POMMASS & KODOWO (arch 98)

—a collection of tracks that range from the more serious to the playful you could drive 10



## MUSIC TAKES ME HIGHER

by THE WYVING (arch 97)

the wryman disco-adelic, gypsy-funk 1979 and 1980 tracks created by a conglomeration of 14 different artists to create a unique sound for the album in '92

substage@server.com

distributed by **OFFSHOCK** Germany Fax: 49-322-510 6306

sampling and reworked commissions. Instead of drawing in a number of "turns" to feed off, the duo call on trends and allies, in an extended support network that crosses from Hardcore, Industrial, turntable and Techno to electronics, Robert and mainstage noise. Orono Yoshida, James Ploker, We's DJ Olive, 2nd Gen Mix Master Mike, Pauline, David Shea and Vorn Linn are each dragged into the mix at varying stops. Spooky, Haukai & Wakemon and VVH make their presence felt through various pseudonymous aliases. Expanding Bomb's 20th biggest releases, the Executive mix emerges as a densely textured and massively detailed work. Recalling the captured syntax of Mannequin's trench poetry, its fractured flow details the series in a slurry of film and TV voices, blips, glitches, radio interference, not frequencies scratches, wailing sirens, rapid bursts of laser noise, caustic fluids and bowled quaker suit face denotations. Beets are jelled, go asms. Gitch-loops and chunks of locking groove now emerge and reside. Inevitably faded, at times the mix gets too dense, too mucky and overloaded to bear. Running to a testing 68 minutes, they should have made room for more pauses and spatial digressions.

A protacted essay in the art of sonic terrorism and the everthing-up-for-grabs aesthetic of turntablism (coming with a set of DJ loops, the album is a tool in itself), Executive hicks out a space somewhere between the not zones of OHR, the digital features of Mego and the turntablism of Christian Marclay and Orono Yoshida. It's an invigorating energy rush, an endurance test for the shock troops of hardcore futurism.

DAVID HOWELL

## DJ Spooky Takes Subliminal Kid Reddun Warfare

OUTROST RECORDINGS (PRB10001) (C)

Warfare? Against what exactly? The retro sci-fi cover art, under the direction of Paul Miller, DJ Spooky Takes Subliminal Kid's Other Half, shows kids of video games icons attacking a dark cluster of city skyscrapers silhouetted against what might be the swirling white hemisphere of a nuclear detonation. Music has been shown to have several neurophysiological properties, but so far one has been able to find a practical application for it as an effective weapon. Bombs and flying saucers constitute the big science myth of the late 20th century. Ergonomically causal, they exist only as potential events, phantom communications from universes parallel to our own. But which side are they on? Having left the dulled-out wordless nightmares of Songs Of Dread Dreamer behind him, Spooky enters urban space in search of new possibilities. "It's the business of the future to be dangerous," a child's voice announces calmly after an opening salvo of fax signals. Space Invader

flack, telephone answering service messages and self-help tapes. Like references to plastic and TV tubes in 60s and 70s pop songs, such things no longer signify what it to come, but identify objects with which we are already familiar. In the same way, there is nothing on this disappointing collection of Old School Hip-Hop references and digested soundbytes that in any way challenges, threatens or excites.

For all his busy sound and guest rappers, Spooky conjures up no real moments of surprise, just a growing sense of weary recognition. And when it comes to homophobic jokes against "perverts, queers, Pee Wee Herman masturbation" from the likes of Kool Keith and Sir Masek, can it get any weirder? The police bust of Pee Wee (aka Paul Reubens) in a Florida porno theater was the start of an invasive media offensive through which the private acts of public figures have been turned against them in an expulsiatory information loop aimed at regulating their behavior. As a large number of rap artists, long and dead, must appreciate, but then it's all just language, right? The rest of the free-style, cut-out-up credits here sound like so much pious tremors from that star.

Less encumbered by theoretical musings than previous releases, Spooky's street-level science fiction quickly degenerates into directionless noise, reaching its embarrassing nadir on "A Conversation," where he trades hard-fisted deck technique and mumbled comments about authorship with DJ Ambassador Jr. The deep space probes of his 1995 Neopolis mix project seem to have taken place long ago in a galaxy far, far away. Overall, Reddun Warfare sounds as though it was thrown together in a salad bar a bit of TopHog, a little drum 'n' bass, a separate solo here, a walking bassline there, that some sample from "Buffalo Girls" that everybody else uses. The spectral figure of heform music invention makes a couple of unexpected intrusions disguised as guitar solos by Arto Lindsay and Thurston Moore, but the effect in both cases is heavily compromised by the endless filler surrounding them.

Is this music all about advancing by familiarity, an attempt to break through into the Hip-Hop market which DJ Spooky formerly found so compressed and constricting? Or is it a demonstration of just how boring the future will be? Intentions are not always clear. As Pee Wee Herman would say whenever he was caught tripping, "I meant to do that." Confusing beats you've heard before and attitudes you thought you never have to put up with again. Reddun Warfare ultimately comes over as pure product. Only copyright lawyers and record company executives will find anything of interest here. The closing track, "Twilight Fugue," features vocals taken from a traditional Buddhist mantra, Mani Pa Dhami (public domain). "Nuff said," Coe laughter

REN HOLLINGS

## Mika Vainio/Pita/Charlemagne Palestine Three Compositions For Machines

STALKAART 510035 CO

A beautifully direct and inventive album. The three principal pieces were commissioned by Stalkeart and recorded at a Masterclass festival in The Hague in 1997. Mika Vainio, Pita and Charlemagne Palestine (or Charlemagne, as he appears on the sleeve) collaborate. Russia's art of noise on three homemade machines, developed by C Schlegel. Sadly, no details of their design are given. Russia is nowhere mentioned either, but the machines instantly suggest his fabled Inhumanism, the homemade constructions given names like Ruster and Howler that breathe and pulse with the muttering of motors that armed and pulse with an undeniable animality.

Vainio plays a new Ruster, which looks like a set of warm-like ducts snaking off into the soundhole. Russia's original could imitate the sound of the wind in leaves, here, a reeling, vibratory hiss — sometimes raw, otherwise rising into a steady-state drone — evokes an archetype of various modernist pressure systems, from an ecstatic Hoover to the central heating in a Soviet tower block. There's an evocative modernist interface here, too, between the baroque and the industrial. Tibetan drums morphing out of stuttering or exhaust pipes, a mythical growing beast machine.

Pita's instrument, the Crescent (Schellenbaum), looks like a metallic trunk with ranks of alarm bells fixed on either side and a spiral chain of electronics. The alarm bells drill into phase in an unruly aggregate, somewhere between ringing hand bells and the tinkling of broken glass. The bells stutter and switch on and off like a dentist's drill, becoming a long jarring drill before the machine somehow settles into delicately clattering percussion, like a battery-powered New Wave guitar.

Palatine, the Minimalist American composer, here plays the Seven (based on Russia's Howler). A series of whining propeller-like drones rise to meet in a dense and dissonant soundcloud, in which one dominant pitch emerges, forcing the surrounding irregularities of tone and tempo perception into a hypnotic state: before the sirens descend and alert as gently as a flight of cranes. The applause following the end of the piece forms a fourth shift, spontaneous clapping piece which comes across as a genuine sound event.

The bonus "Typewriter Piece" by Vainio and Pita was recorded separately in Berlin, but doesn't fit so well in this company. Its clunking mechanical notes and sounds of fingers drumming on a key plate may be sampled from a typewriter, but the background whirring is that of more familiar Ambient oscillators, evolving from motoric vibration to diffuse, breathless into an electric woodpecker. It lacks that special something when compared to the totemic panache of the other machine pieces.

PIAT FYTCH



## Stephen Vitiello

The Light Of Falling Cars  
JHR PRODUCTIONS 2002 CD

## Otomo Yoshihide & Sachiko M

Filament 1  
EXCITE 2004 CD

More scratches and scrapes from the ether than an act of manipulation/regeneration, the other a work of supreme purity and scrutiny which takes Minimalism to new extremes.

First off, Vitiello is a New York-based guitarist and sampler working in numerous media. He has two prior albums to his name on a soundtrack, the other a compilation of music for tapes and installations. *The Light Of Falling Cars* is his first attempt at creating music without a visual component. Helping out are accordion supremo Raylene Oliveros (they recorded together at the per-SON concert in Cologne a year ago), Helen Rose on electric violin, Rebecca Mayes on computer theremin and Paul Gerson on double bass.

Vitiello himself moulds treated guitar with the subtle dentils of the city, and at times it's difficult to discern his colleagues' contributions, such as his wholesale manipulation of sound. It takes a while to get going, but gradually, substance, shapes and colour appear through the diminished hi-fi rumble. By "Slow Say And Camel", we are suddenly, entirely in the same territory as Holger Kruay and Ralf Dammers's "Boat Woman Song", while a similarly mournful title piece features a more upfront Oliveros. The varied instrumentation gives the after a warmth and resonance, particularly Oliveros's accented and Rowe's violin, which lend the album a certain yearning.

From minimal to almost non-existent, former Ground Zero member Yoshihide once said that he wanted his group "to make it feel like the world is almost 'broken'". Well, here it is, in the post-G2 collective guise of Otomo and Sachiko M, all based up and lying in hospital. This really is the sound of scratches and scrapes from the ether: sporadic soft tones, occasional computer hum, and the crackle 'n' buzz of run out grooves. If Vitiello's album takes a while to warm up, *Filament 1* stays clinically cool throughout. By track six, an austere pulse is welcome relief. Track seven is almost "warm". Track ten, weighing in at ten minutes, is the sound of Cage's 4-33' minus performer and audience, with a loose electrical connection buzzing somewhere. To say whether it's any good or not is almost irrelevant. But I can think of better things to do with my time.

DAVID LLOYD

## Robert Wyatt

EPs  
HARMONIA MUNDI 440 5202

"I always loved the EP format, and this was conceived as an EP" introduces Robert Wyatt in his note to *Work In Progress* (1994): the third

of this set's five mix CDs, which span 25 years of 12" singles and remises. Sung it was recorded in response to the US invasion of Grenada. Wyatt recalls his wife and artistic collaborator Alfie's recall of how she rallied the Few to a protest outside the US embassy. Once Robert had scribbled "a very rude, but rather punnier message" on a placard, she drove him, her aging Polish mother and their pregnant dog to the front line — where, bemused CIA spooks photographed them holding the line alone.

When Ealing Film studio closed down, its resident script passed into Robert and Alfie's two individuals ready to risk ridicule — except they always get the self-mockery in first — to do the decent thing, regardless of decency's low rating on the racial thermometer of cool. Its title taken from condemned invasion exercises, "Amber And The Ambassadors", is in that same spirit of saying what needs to be said. Not loudly, mind. Singing soft and high over his and Hugh Hopper's hymnal melody, Wyatt poses his protest as a defiant celebration of "the few few" peacefully working through revolutions in Cuba, Grenada and Mozambique. The spooks might mock, but Wyatt's songs don't bludge easily. This set comrades with an ex-dictator's enforced stay in the UK. Maybe Jimmy Young will play Wyatt's version of a Victor Jara love ballad on Radio 2 and dedicate it to Pinochet, Jara's executioner.

Though Wyatt curls up before the world granger, to these ears his understated singing escapes dignity from the sentimentality of both Peter Gabriel's defeated lament "Biko" (covered on WPI) and Elvis Costello's Fallands song "Shoebulding" (included on EP2). EP4 is 20 minutes of Wyatt's Wasp soundtrack to Victor Schoenfeld's *Annals Film* (1982). EP1 (1974) includes Wyatt's first version of the Phoenixes "I'm A Believer" — great for being sung straight and for Fred Frith's finely grained violin solo — and his flip, "Hemlock". Also featured are the shrewd Tuganovs' follow up, "Yesterday Man", a splendid take of Murgos Fozz's "Sonia", and a live curio "Calyx". Finally, EP5 features four loving remises from Wyatt's 1997 album *Shleep*, reprising, among others, "Free Will And Testament". To a tune by Kramer, he opens his melancholy inquiry with razor-edged but turned mirrors. "Given free will but when certain limitations cannot will myself to limitless mutation I cannot know what I would be/I were not me/can only guess me."

Both song and performance encapsulate Wyatt's artistry in the way his voice reaches high for words sunk deep into soul funk, where they're turbidly spun into the measured lullies that coil upwards slowly without giving anyone the breath.

Closing proceedings with the line, "Let me give please, (I am so very) blind", he periphrases why singles and EPs suit him: he can fire off his rapid responses without running out of stamina. It's always the ones you'd gladly hear more of who know the value of doing less.

BIRA KOPF



EVAN PARKER

Innocent

Long awaited release of classic 1978 solo set

CHRONICLURE 2004 CD



WHAT WE LIVE with DAVE DOUGLAS

Quintet For A Day

Featuring Wallace Lee Smith & Laurence Owens

NEW RECORDS 2004 CD



BELLENDOU MEDEAUD

C'est Pas Moi Points

Tons of the art inspired beat Algerian Rai

WINDUP 20 2004 CD



MIGUEL POVEDA

Buena Fama

Compromising Remises

HARMONIA MUNDI 2004 CD



JOHN TAVENER

Eternity's Sunrise

The Academy Of Ancient Music, Andrew Place

HARMONIA MUNDI 2004 CD



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Gaga For Ya Ya: Ya Ya Ya Ya Ya Ya Ya Ya Ya Ya

Chase Zylfuss compilation

WINDUP 20 2004 CD



STRET BEHINDS-ENTENORE E

CUNICORDU DI CROSEI

Cuba Vox: ImprovWorld fusion based on

traditional Caribbean music

WINDUP 20 2004 CD



TURQUIE

Camillelles compagne

Rued Karadja

WINDUP 20 2004 CD



Available from the VIRGIN REGISTARS OXFORD ST, TOWER PICCADILLY (Experimental section), BROUGH TRADE and all serious specialists. In case of difficulty obtaining any of our labels, or for wholesalers and export enquiries, please contact us directly in London

Harmonia Mundi, 1921 Nile Street, London NW1 7LL

Info: 011 406 2767, Fax: 011 253 3337

Orders: 011 253 3663

E-mail: info.uk@harmoniamundi.com



# in brief classical

Reviewed by Andy Hamilton

## Pierre-André Arcaud Cres + 7

NEW ALIAS DEBUT CD  
Pierre-André Arcaud comes across as a genius of sound on the highly recommended release "Police sonore" is too pretty a description for his unremitting industrial-styled constructions, built on brute sample repetition of such as *La Mort d'Antoine Arcaud* is correct. Elsewhere, two tracks reveal a passion for steam engines, while *Traité Entre Les Modes* sounds like electronic gamelan.

## Luciano Berio Chamber Music

NEW 61 907542 (C)  
Outstanding recordings, played by The Ensemble Avanguardie, of chamber works by Italy's foremost modernist. Two of Berio's famous *Sequences* for solo instruments are featured — IV for piano and III for cello (King 1968) was originally a vehicle for vocalist Cathy Berberian and later became a movement of *Sequenza*. Less familiar is *Quasi* (1973) for two voices, vibraphone and marimba. Berio is a melodist as well as an avant gardist, and this piece exploits the gentle floating as well as the percussive qualities of his instruments.

## Matthew Burnier Portals Of Destruction: Music For Saxophones Computers And Stones

NEW 526 (C)  
Trying to take in the vastness of computer pieces like *Fem* it's hard to avoid thinking of the Alaskan wilderness where Burnier spent his youth. This uses the digital granular synthesis developed by the composer at Xenakis Upic studios in Paris. Burnier's own philosophy of music aims to fuse technology and organic constituents, most eloquently in *Fem* for computer noise controller and stone into whose levels of filtered noise blur the polyrhythmic swirling stories. The equally compelling *Sequenza* one piece occasionally break out into something like a free jazz solo. Some of the most easily effective electroacoustic music I've heard.

## Lindsay Cooper A View From The Bridge

NEW 1135 9429631 2803  
A survey of Cooper's compositions includes the gawky *Concerto For Saxophone Solo And Strings* — unique in the repertoire? — and *Songs*. Waters, composed for the chamber group *Gemini* and performed by them on this CD. This is light music in the sense that dark moods are kept at bay, but the quality is vibrant and the sweetness can get irritating.

## Ric Graebner Veritas In Landscape

NEW 1018 9091019 (C)  
Ric Graebner is an Austrian composer based

in the UK who has increasingly turned to electronic composition. These recent pieces are all components of audio-visual works, claiming a healthy disregard for "serious electronic music", and embracing references to acoustic instruments in a way that masters of the art such as Bernard Parmegiani would avoid. Graebner says he likes the speed of production in recent technology, inadvertently pinpointing the collection's problem, since his pieces can appear glo in the freestanding context of a CD.

## Peter Herresthal Ploaen Accept My Darts

NEW 10231 (C)  
Rolf Wallin *Movie Music* 10203 (C)  
The grey voice of Jan Garbarek might be the most popular sound of Norway, but these two CDs of Norwegian contemporary composition explore a livelier ethos. Volin Herresthal plays music by electronic composers Arne Nordheim and Olav Anton Thommessen. Electronics figure in only the last two movements of Nordheim's *Antro* for Paul Klee (1985) where the solo violin plays against a delayed and very echoey distortion of his own performance. Two snappy pieces by Thommessen, including *Alto Accept My Darts* for violin and piano, reveal a debt to the older composer.

Rolf Wallin's *Flow* profiles richly contrasting pieces written in the last decade. Kaleidoscopic in the style of leading Finnish composer Magnus Lindberg, *Solve Et Coagula* has already been recorded by chamber ensemble *Globe* like *The Wire* 1591. It's a gloriously kinetic exploration of sound masses that mimic the wing of a crazy pendulum. A similar effect is found in *King*, performed by BIT 70 from Bergen. The percussion piece *Stone* is the most mathematical in composition. But though most pieces are derived from fractals as found in chaos theory, the results are much more immediately approachable than Xenakis's stochastic compositions. An outstanding release.

## Denman Maroney Hyperpiano

NEW MUSIC NO NUMBER CD  
Maroney's wacky, preposterous piano is a development of both Cage and Nancarrow. He attaches moving as well as fixed parts to the instrument, sliding objects across the strings, making some tracks sound more like a percussion ensemble. Though Maroney has been developing his techniques for 25 years, and has participated in a wealth of collaborations on New York's downtown avant scene, this is his first solo CD. Cage and Nancarrow turned to 19th century technology in the middle of the 20th, and

Maroney looks like continuing it into the 21st. The effects are fun but pull a little over the long haul.

## Christof Migone Vex

NEW CD  
If you enjoy being visited, you will not want to miss the grindings and grinnings of Vex. Christof Migone is assisted by Michel F. Cole, Louis Quillet, and Gregory Whelan. The disc is divided into three zones, designated *Sate*, *Antoni Arcaud* and *Asies Deleuse*, respectively, with 20 minutes of short tracks in each. *Sate* was known for *Visitors* of his own, of course, and his zone is the most colourful, concluding with a splintering one minute "Sate Hardcore". *Arcaud* involves more melodic reflections, with mournful sax prominent on some tracks. But there's a minute attention to detail throughout this quality release.

## Doina Rotaru Flute Concerto/Symphony No 2/ Concerto For Saxophone(s)

NEW CD  
Romanian composers seem to have an affinity with the saxophone. Carols, by the surely neglected Stefan Niculescu, was performed at the Huddersfield Festival some years ago. Its bewailing sound, as recall, anticipates Doina Rotaru's concerto, which is equally compelling. Such is the fervour of Emil Sen's playing that it banishes thoughts of the usually fussy classical saxophone. Since performing the beautifully textured *Flute Concerto*, Pierre-Yves Arcaud has commissioned three more from Rotaru. The University Of Huddersfield Symphony Orchestra and — for the *Flute Concerto* New Music Ensemble perform this fine composer to such a high standard you forget they are amateur players.

## Schaitke/Takemitsu/Weill Works For Chamber Orchestra

NEW 10182 (C)  
Young British violinist David Hope joins The English Symphony Orchestra for works where tragedy and despair are never far from the surface. Schaitke's *Sonata For Violin And Chamber Orchestra* is a jazz-inflected work from the 60s, while Kurt Weill's early yet masterly *Concerto For Violin And Wind Orchestra* gets a powerful reading. Toru Takemitsu's tribute to Andre Tarkovsky is named *Amataguchi* after his semi-autobiographical film. Takemitsu's seichuan tendencies never invade into a haunting lament that evokes mist and water.

## Philip Sheppard The Glass Cathedral

NEW 10203 (C)  
Sheppard is a colossus with The Smet Quartet, and he plays both acoustic and electric instruments on his album of original compositions. Both the title track and *Hansel's* (C) *Chamber* are excellent but

rather directionless soundscapes and the term *New Age* comes to mind.

## Rodrigo Sigal Marafiesto

NEW CD  
It would be *à la mode* to talk you on a "gypsy journey," "announces a voice in the RAGAs lanes of the obligatory English violin from a Hollywood film of the 1930s or 40s. The vehicle is what Rodrigo Sigal describes as "mainly Heicon Electroacoustic Chamber Music." Hans Stammevel's flute is prominent in *Sate*-like constructions which employ the chamber music forms of concert. Electronic and computer parts are created from samples recorded on portable DAT, with environmental sounds and Mexican colour. Diving and rather shallow.

## Leonid Soybelman Surfing In My Bed

NEW 10182 (C)  
Fied under *Classica* because the music is performed on classical Spanish guitar, but seriously. Soybelman's spectacular explorations are hard to categorize. His guitar is amplified through a small practice amp, and dedications go to Marc Raut and Checco Chaboune rather than Segovia. Tunes are low and nasal rather than tone is Segovia's dominant means of expression. But there is a fractured vision here — expressed through a barrage of effects from feedback barrages to gentle wisping.

## The Tännelmar Quartet Music In Darkness

NEW 10182 (C)  
Astrid is Warner's Swedish subsidiary but the ethos, design and film references are ECM territory. The three quartets by Swedish composers Knut Håkonsen, Per Lindgren and Hans Larsson are dedicated to Ingmar Bergman. All are short — "tinnig quartet" for Surelyn's one movement *Sequenza* at under five minutes. The dedication reflects the mood of the music, but though there are echoes of Kurtág, Schreker and other striking individual. Well worth exploring.

## John Tavener Eternity's Sunrise

NEW 10182 (C)  
I finally saw the light when I read Tavener in a recent interview. "I often think there's more love in a single song by Randy Newman than in all the pieces of Elliott Carter put together." There's certainly more celestial redem in all of Tavener's effusions than in all of Carter and Randy Newman put together. As with Arvo Part, you can doubt his sincerity, but in contrast to the Estonian Minimalist, the simplicity of his music doesn't express any underlying unity. *Eternity's Sunrise* and *Song Of The Angel* are symptomatic tales on this disc, as backed by The Academy Of Ancient Music. You'll surely need some gritty Elliott Carter after the ...

# in brief critical beats

Reviewed by Rob Young

## Justin Berkovi 01273 Violence

EP FORCE INC. RH155 12

"Dodge N' Burn" is the first track to come out of this Brighton boy's workstation. It takes huge liberties with the pulse: slamming accents around the central core with increasing derring do, as if he's stabbing a knife between fingers played on a table.

## Thomas Brinkmann

Enka/Fraukele Einst 5 12

Thomas Brinkmann Brown

RH155 12

Perennial bachelor Brinkmann is dedicated to stroking his ladies bare in his ongoing series of Ernst vinyls. But did the women to whom all the tracks in the series are supposedly dedicated leave him because he spent too much time with his turntable? More delicately put than much of Cologne's current Techno output, "Fraukele" has the 4/4 kick swept from under her feet as Brinkmann lets the watch mechanism that surrounds it click away with the finesse of a chrome-plated executive toy. "Enka" must

have been an outdoor type: a tape of street-park-bum twitters foisted behind her. Brown is introduced with Rakin's "Pump up the volume" instruction: its twitching hi-hats spike the air, evoking merciless farm equipment. When he tries to tell Kraftwerk where to get off by sampling "Bong Boom Tschuk", the poverty of the source refuses to allow him to shine.

## Druckwelle Platinierungwerstatt

EP HCLAR HCLAR0002 12

Andreas Fragel Mit Ohne

Sound HCL HCL001 12

Rhau and Vreco's first Druckwelle EP. Inscrutable 76 was a ditty enough plucker of Bavarian rough-cut funk. But to elevate the boredom of shiftbucking in their local supermarket in Bielefeld, southern Germany, they come up with this? "Giangiene" is only good for comfort eating when what you need is frowder. Pressing four tracks of lightweight, Moogey ambience on audiophile vinyl is a little like crushing garlic in a bathtub. Düsseldorf jazz music Andreas Fragel's

debut sounds similarly overworked and undercooked. Though we'd seen the death of this nearly groomed sound when Out Records went to ground.

## Flanger Flanger EP NINE NINE52 12

One of the peaks of Niploplace Urban Field's Bernd Friedmann was the Drome album he produced for NINE in 1994. It's good to see his association with the Ninja offshoot continuing: this time he's been locked in the studio with nothing but a drum lat and Atom Heart for company. Recorded in Heart's Santiago studio, the wit and wisdom of NINE's Golden Star album have warped even further in the Chilean heat. On "Endless Summer" Friedmann injects twitchy rhythms like nervous fingers drummed on a zither. "Short Note With A Fear" reduces Atom's stoppered Rhodes to a mess of heat-bubbling paint and there's a great percussion jam on tones that resemble stacks of polystyrene packaging rubbed over each other.

## Freiland Orange Red FREILAND RH155 12

Mike Ink aka Wolfgang Vogt seems to get a mention every month in these pages, but only because he's been setting up a new label every week. It feels like (K)erosin is the latest. Acid pearls released on 7" one a week until the end of the year. His two Freiland

releases to date have each carried a three-track assortment of styles, all of which contain the singularity of purpose of his Sado 1 sides, and the sound polymerization witnessed on the more playful Proton singles. As he proved on his transformation of Marc Bolan's "Hot Love", Vogt loves exerting the sleight of hand that transforms a Techno grid into a polka-dot shuffle, and the long track here (no titles please!) does the same to bouncy samples that sound like a sucked dodgeroo.

## Tusken Raiders Bantha Trix 2

PLANET MU 0006 12

Tusken Raiders Motorbike

Track PLANET MU 0006 12

Could Mike Paradinas have re-adopted his Tusken Raiders moniker because of the impending new Star Wars movie? Calculated or not, the four tracks were recorded for Clear a long time ago, though they're in a gelatin roll left far away from what passes for drum in bass these days. Bass pook whizz across the sound stage as if a mass lighthouse skirmish is underway in an acoustic despatch from the Death Star's landing bay. New track "Motorbike Track" on the second EP newer offers a smooth role editor, but it's lopsidedly lost with the driver's attention constantly distracted by what sounds like a crowd who's just learned to argue back.



**DJ CULTURE**  
**ULF POSCHARDT**  
**QUARTET BOOKS**

'In the long run two record-players and a mixing desk are more exciting than five guitar strings' Neil Tennant, Pet Shop Boys

DJ CULTURE is the first serious work in the history of the DJ and focuses on the 'language' of the DJ from record spinner to mixmaster. It is a fascinating and substantial contribution to the writing of pop history.

Translated from the German by Alison Whitelade

Price: £13.00 £ 11.71 ISBN 3082  
E: quartetbooks@compnet.co.uk

# in brief electronica

Reviewed by Tim Owen

**Howie B** *Scratch* (Rustynote) CD \$14.99  
Superficially, *Scratch* is a technically appealing disc. There's no jangling with Howie B's production skills, and it's refreshing to hear a relatively commercial sensibility brought to bear on fairly uncommercial material. Even so, *Scratch* is somehow unsatisfying. Some of its tracks are clearly an audio business card, with Howie laying his skills out on the soundboard so everyone can admire his alchemical way with avant beats and samplings. This could be unfair: the more readily identifiable of his reworked samples include both The Who and Sade, marking out Howie as both open-minded and on the money. In which case, he could do something a bit more interesting next time around.

**House Opera** *3 Cornered Room* (Nonesuch) CD \$14.99  
Birmingham-based Symeon associate Steve Taylor does a superb job kicking the Planet's ball into leftfield far away from drill in *House Opera*. It's not musical excess per se. For all the in-your-face convulsions, the marriage of live digitala, guitar-driven rhythm tracks and Electro fills show House Opera is no one-track pony. "Grinch" segues neatly from a relaxed funk rhythm over manipulated percussion samples into drum 'n' bass breakdown. The title track is a Techno take on hybrid synths. And "Agility" does brooches common ground between Paul Schutte and John Bant. And at 30 minutes, *3 Cornered Room* cuts out before it gets cloying or irritating.

**Abdrecht Kunze** *Testament* (Rustynote) CD \$14.99  
Subtly oddball full-length from Abdrecht Kunze, previous associate of Chisel Records and Wilhelm's Payola as B. Recordings like *I-K-F*, Keith Tucker and Klon. Kunze has made it his business to jettison Electro-fests out of nostalgia without losing any of the music's original zing. Living loose from jazz records play in tiny subtrains all over the album, but Kunze's deft handling reinvigorates the kind of music available for sampling. The sprightly double bass and saxophone roller of "Ties & Ties" and "Up to the mood of a Southern church" add up to the mood of a Southern church, while "Stuntshow" imagines a quantized belated. Kunze makes even the most primitive rhythm machines turn on a sweeney check the brain-slashing patterns of "G1 7 11". You can picture an animated video to this, a speed-up tangle of line-art automata. (Rob Young)

**Low Res** *Approximate Love Boat* (Rustynote) CD \$14.99  
A dozen "Major Alien Interpretations Of Earth Music" documented by alien muscologists "after ages searching for the correct signal and the omnipresent noise of space." Trouble is, the aliens accidentally deleted the CD on the way home, causing them "to recreate the wondrous music with the technologies available to them." Suspectively, these technologies sound uncannily like our own, but enough already with the concepts. Approximately is made up of alien hermetic configurations, beat patterns, converted to base 23, and that weird-but-effective alien everyone seems to be unquipping their tracks with right now. It's genuinely off-world sounding, as though composed by a being whose body didn't allow it to experience regular beat structures, let alone dance (keep those comments about bedroom musicians to yourself, as the back) (Rob Young)

**Kompakt Köln Presents**  
**Michael Mayer** *Neubausse* (Kompakt) CD \$14.99  
After a promising start with Kandel's "Dilod" — an unthrummed march set to hand percussion and sparse drum machine patterns — Michael Mayer's mix CD of Euro House tracks has little new over, slick and satisfying as often. On *Neubausse*, his "traps" things into intriguingly out of kilter but the rendering doesn't quite take hold. Belatedly, then, "The Modern and Christian" (Purgeson finally start to get things into a higher gear, setting us up for Don's tech zero-humour and W-Poon's untitled pulp tones, with more generic House from Zine and Techno House from Q11) to close.

**Pete Namlook & Burhan Özal** *Sinthes* — Özmen (K) CD \$14.99  
**Klaus Schulze** *Pete Namlook/Bill Laswell* *The Dark Side Of The Moog* (K) CD \$14.99  
In its infancy, Pete Namlook's Fax label promised to subvert the normality of mass-produced commercial music, with limited CD editions of intelligent electronica. Now after a seemingly endless string of such releases, Namlook's various projects often struggle to validate themselves on purely musical terms. The *Dark Side Of The Moog* 7 is pure nostalgia for synth fetishists (only Sultan — Özmen is another matter. The seven-part "The Celibate Gossamer Yakkymov" contrasts Burhan Özal's traditional Turkish percussion instruments with Namlook's

Wolfram RIME and Steinberg Cubase software. Özal has impressive credentials in both pure folk and jazz fusion, notably in his ethno funk/HipHop partnership with ex-Oriente Coleman bassist Jamaaladeen Tacuma, but Sultan — Özmen convulses on its own terms.

**Rosy Parlane** *#1-4* (Sigma Editions) CD \$14.99  
**Parmentier** *L'Esquadrone* (Sigma Editions) CD \$14.99  
New Zealand's Sigma Editions is an outlet for the composers, collective Sigma, whose manifestos was inspired by Alexander Troch's notion to "give the power of individuals to a collective flywheel." Their CD presentation is minimal in the extreme, featuring blank white sleeves bearing an absolute minimum of information, so the density of each artist is subsumed in the collective — more like successfully. Rosy Parlane features on both, once solo and again in duo with Don Workman as Parmentier. Parmentier return to do what they once explored as they're an imposing guitar and drum trio. In this guise they combine sustained, high pitched tones with visceral low end rumble and drone. Played at high volume, it's awesome. Solo Parlane collages denser sounds sourced by piano guitar and electroacoustics, and brings them to a level of hypnotic refinement. Both releases deserve sustained and serious attention.

**Phase 4** *Vo The Rubber* (Immigrants From Planet Babel) CD \$14.99  
**Phase 4** *Also Bach* (C) comes up with more alien (but this time involving interplanetary sex slaves). These 4-5 sounds are neither identifiable as music. Babel's N. Bostler made *Mom's Voice* in an Electro scratch-combo-dance showpiece. Its silliness might mask the utter lack of originality of the whole enterprise, but it's all done with vigour and verve, ripping along at a storming rate while resolutely avoiding any urge to find troublesome new sounds or textures. (Both accomplished and gamely compusive. I warned to this album, despite myself. It's by far the least pretentious offering here.)

**Solar X** *Little Pretty Automatic* (Worm Interface) CD \$14.99  
Roman Belaven, aka Solar X, is a DJ, record label boss, software designer, qualified physicist and mortal arts champion from Russia. He also collects rare synthesizers. His music is at once raw and gamely, if any musical tendencies kept in check by his prodigious musicality. Winning computer simulations and studying artificial intelligence might not be the best credentials for an artist, but Belaven is interested in exploring the possibility of artificial intelligence engineering computer emotion. For all his

Renaissance man credentials, Belaven knows how to imbue his synths with human warmth.

**Leif Eggenre/SouRice** *research/Matmos RGB* (An Audio Spectrum) CD \$14.99  
Curated by UK label SouRice Research Recordings, RGB attempts to convey electronica expressions of the colours red, green and blue as perceived by Swede Leif Eggenre, SouRice Research, and San Francisco samplers Matmos. These are bookended by further SouRice Research edits of all the material on the CD into two extra pieces called "Black" and "White." "Black" is silence, "White" is a collage of the three individual compositions. Eggenre's Red is a grim, anguished wail. "Black" is an electric field constructed by frequencies emanating from a human body. "SouRice Research suite for the less distinct image of 'another green world' — a guitar and drum improvisation incorporated into an unsettled field of found and synthesized sound. Matmos, who recently renamed Bork's "Hunter", play waxy warm and gives musical saw and drums in addition to their sampling. As irregularities, SouRice Research make a fine job of bringing it all together in an absorbing whole by structuring their content to bridge the other works.

**Jimi Tenor** *Organism* (WAA) CD \$14.99  
Jimi Tenor's last album, 1997's *Attention* was full of cheeky grace and charm, and he predictably reveals his winning fusion of Gay Liberation and jazz/funk influences on this new release. But *Organism* concentrates all Tenor's musical personality into a restrictive template, in an effort to achieve something more marketable. A 60 piece Finnish group chom on two tracks does little to vary the mood on this almost perversely homogeneous record. Still, it's not short on Tenor's wry attractions, his sound is a gloriously sleekly as kindred spirits as far apart as Air and Teddy Pendergrass.

**Young Farmers Claim Future** *Not A Feistschrift* (Stylus) CD \$14.99  
Lost the *Geistwörter* Future game into your computer's CD-ROM drive and a grid of flickering image fragments plays across your monitor. As each image is selected, an audio fragment is produced, so the game can be played blind, with only the sounds as guides. The music itself takes some getting used to. Like the images, fragments of rhythm are assembled in British fashion, with the predominant percussion sounds offset by surprising vocal and instrumental manipulations. It's rather too too there to convince, but it's also so multifaceted that it's hard to dismiss.

# in brief jazz

Reviewed by Julian Cowley

## Tony Bevan Three Oranges

HOUSHELD CD (USA 70001) 3 CD

Tony Bevan played tenor saxophone on an iconic release with Greg Kingdon and Matt Lewis. He added soprano for the *Bleghorns* trio with Paul Rogers and Steve Noble. On his next 3" CD, recorded at London's Orange Bar last July, he winks for 18 minutes with the bass member of the sax family. The results are predictably electrifying, extending to some rare ragtime male trumpeting.

## Ari Brown Voxibus Delmar Desca CD

Chicago stationer Ari Brown blows tenor occasionally venturing onto alto and soprano saxophones. On *Voxibus*, he discards a dual pedigree (previously a straight-ahead pop-bopper, on "Roscoe") he observes the more elusive tenets of AACJ performance. The concluding track, which features alto and soprano horns played simultaneously, pays tribute to Roland Kirk, whose transitional orientation, straddling avant-garde and traditional jazz, Brown seems to share. But on this evidence he lacks the flair which enabled Kirk to hold those strands in precarious balance. Ultimately a merely solid performance, with standard piano, drums and bass accompaniment.

## Hans Burgener/Bazze

Phillips/Martin Schütz Heart Transfusions CD (USA 535) CD

Swiss exiles Martin Schütz and Adrien Hans Burgener met with veteran American bassist Baze Phillips in Brussels to provide music for dance. Seizing the opportunity to make their second recording, they produced this potent document. Improving string ensembles too often settle into post-Waldenian cliché, but there is far too much vitality for that to be a danger on *Heart Transfusions*. The collective vocabulary accommodates all manner of swirling, rattling and shuddering sounds, but it is the players' extraordinary control of dynamics that makes this such an impressive and purposeful collaboration.

## Eugene Chadbourne Worms

With Strings CD (USA 6) CD

The contrary currents of latest antics combine his passion for traditional American stringed instruments such as dobro, banjo and mandolin, with an unorthodox, rooted-in-local motifs. The strings are a bit and truly and are enthusiastically kept off-kilter. Folk forms come into view, then take to the hills as Chadbourne's gaily appear, wielding Pukisara moon-clearer, using procession horn and Portuguese man-of-war guitar. Shalukhah ddjgogoo, harmonica, oboe, bassoon, piano

and accordion are hurled in for good measure. Things are getting mighty strange in these parts.

## Ernesto Diaz-Infante Tépexco

HOUSHELD CD (USA 70001) 3 CD

The title alludes to a god of Central America's Mayan civilization, who was said to be responsible for drawing order out of chaos. This set of piano solos, which Diaz-Infante conceived as an analogous ordering process, is at its best when tinged with the alchemist's influence of John Coltrane's more contemplative modal improvisations. Elsewhere, Diaz-Infante is limped playing, recorded in California, is inclined to drift into weedy New Age diffuseness.

## Friedemann Graef & Achim

Goettfert Saxophone Improvisations CD

The FMP output has inclined towards militant declarations of jazz freedom. Its characteristic sound has embraced the bronchial ferocity of Peter Brötzmann and the snail's strength of Rudger Klä. In that company, Saxophone appears remarkably chaste. A neatly groomed duo, Friedemann Graef and Achim Goettfert are extremely fine musicians, however, utilising the entire range of saxophones from bass to soprano, they demonstrate their command of a variety of sounds and an impressive array of techniques. Their intricate, disciplined melodic sounds more composed than most FMP releases, nonetheless, it is exhilarating music.

## Frode Gjerstad Irm Circulations

HOUSHELD CD (USA 655) CD

Almost Frode Gjerstad was a founder member of Detat, alongside John Stevens and Johnny Dwyer. Last year, he recorded *Remember To Forget*, in the formidable Company of Horned Duke and William Parker. After conversing with drummers and bassists of that calibre, it is scarcely surprising that he found the monologue of Irm hard to accomplish. These ten solos are the culmination of his lengthy exploration of unorthodox techniques. The necessary final impetus arrived following a short tour duisting with Peter Brötzmann. The alto's inherent quality adds a particular pungency to Gjerstad's gorgeous saxophones.

## Italian Instabile Orchestra

Festival Piza Teatro Verdi

December 1997 CD (USA 302) 2CD

The young big-band music of the Italian Instabile Orchestra, interspersed with much finer small-group improvisations, is documented across these two CDs and

accompanying 24-page booklet. The music certainly merits the attention, with important players such as bassist Bruno Tommasini, saxophonist Mario Sclano and trumpeter Enrico Rava among the assembled company. The buoyancy of their collective sound makes comparable outfits, such as The Berlin Contemporary Jazz Orchestra, seem almost ponderous. Giancarlo Schifano and Saverio Trombadori play for trombone and live electronics is a highlight among the stylistically varied smaller combinations.

## Marce Johnson & Eric

Longworth 12 Trees Could Fly

HOUSHELD CD

Marce Johnson is a prolific bassist who has performed high-profile work with John Abercrombie, Bill Frisell and Pat Metheny. The altogether more obscure electric cello Eric Longworth is a recent arrival in jazz circles, after training in classical contexts. Their meeting here is a relaxed and true one, smoothly textured after Longworth takes the bulk of compositional credit. It is as much a plucking as a bowing record, with plenty of mellow chugging in the low register.

## John Law/Tim Wells/Paul

Clarvis Saxophone Without Words

USA 11) CD

John Law is an immensely tactful courtier who impresses not with brash displays of technical virtuosity, but through unerring exercise of refined judgment. His taste is for Thelousian funk and medieval European music, and elements drawn from both sit comfortably within his spacious musical conception. Yet his own voice remains refreshingly distinctive. In drummer Paul Clarvis and American bassist Tim Wells, he has found ideally discreet collaborator, and together they conjure a delicate eponym on the surface of their artfully balanced yet structurally complex improvisations.

## Stefano Maltese Open Sound

Ensemble L'attesa d'Alba CD (USA 11) CD

Under the banner of The Open Sound Ensemble, Italian resident Stefano Maltese leads an ad hoc grouping, bringing together pianist Sophia Domachou, bassist Paul Rogers and Arkady Shmorchkov on French and Rughehorns, plus his compatriots Antonio Malacosta on drums and Giordana Cole on vocals. The compositions are Maltese's own, but he generously allocates room for the soloists to demonstrate their considerable talents. The very angularity of his own writing suggests that Maltese recognised an opportunity not to be squandered here, and the music gels as convincingly as if the ensemble were a long-term project.

## Michael Maining The Book Of

Flame Acher CD (USA 11) CD

Michael Maining's strongly patterned, electric blues manipulations, enhanced with

samples, loops and synthesizers, fit well into the category designated by David Torn as "Avantgarde Ambient music." Burnished rock rhythms and clanks of rotund funk are the principal ingredients, enhanced with a smattering of near-lethi Onemilium and occasional electronic wails. Assured guests drop in to contribute percussion and piano and on one track, Paul McCandless adds a touch of bass dinner.

## Rajesh Mehta featuring Paul

Lovens CD (USA 11) Solos & Duos

HOUSHELD CD

Calicut-born American trumpeter Rajesh Mehta studied composition with Anthony Braxton at Mills College, California. Several years' residency in Amsterdam have added to the breadth of his improvisation, and Ohio shows him to be one of the most intriguing exponents of the instrument currently at work. Not only does he apply extended techniques to the conventional horn, he also explores hybrid trumpet (with edgework) and grants a rare chance to hear the bass trumpet in action. These gently creative investigations are especially intriguing with none of the trumpet's showpiece flashiness. On all but three pieces he is spurred on by the judicious Paul Lovens, a suitably forthright and resourceful drummer.

## Malachi Thompson Freebop

Now! Delmark (USA 655) CD

Malachi Thompson's voracious trumpet has heralded The Freebop Band for more than two decades. Saxophonists Oliver Lake and Carter Jefferson are among the guests helping out with this polished and energetic 20th anniversary celebration. Despite the presence of percussionist Harold Drake on two tracks, however, there is not much evidence now of the radical edge Thompson honed during his membership of the AACJ's volatile "Sound Midnight" seems an indulgent indulgence. On the other hand, there is an ambitious suite based on a poem by Amiri Baraka, who puts in a personal appearance, delivering a recitation with characteristic vigor.

## Mike Westbrook The Orchestra Of Smiths Academy

HOUSHELD CD

A collection of seven recent compositions all bearing Mike Westbrook's unmistakable signature, and all derived from a harmonic device he calls the "Smiths' Hotel Chord." Six pieces were recorded in 1992, at Gray's Outside in festival, three of them settings for Mike Westbrook's vocal. The seventh, a lengthy composition for blues for ambientist Danilo Ferrel, was performed at the 1995 Chathamham Festival by Steve Mandel's ensemble. These pieces lack the ragged exuberance of his recently recorded earliest recordings, but there is ample compensation in their cunning arrangements, and meticulously crafted performances.

# in brief outer limits

Reviewed by Brian Duguid

## Amber Enclave ANT-004274 CD

I know absolutely nothing about Amber, and learnt from Enclave only that they are highly competent creators of identikit suburban-ambient with a sound that's approachable and free from unnecessary muck. It's a bit like The Orb, if I dare you know black. If your shelves are already clogging under the weight of vaguely sinister mood music, they won't need more, but if you've never doped a toe, this is a valedly well judged and proficient effort.

## AMM/Merzbow For Una/Tower Of Ghast RAM CA - 401012 CD

Curated by Dave Croucher. Dave Howell, of *Obscene Eye* magazine, the latest instalment in Fat Cat's split single series is also the most recent. The AMM track dominates the horrid, too live in Graz, Austria in 1998. An ominous circular hum, like black-beetle breath, heaves and parts as a low wave static radio transmission creeps round four walls. This is AMM's best record in a long time, with John Tebb's piano refreshingly bold and evocative. Marmalade's contribution was originally supposed to be "Ab Hunter" (readily his most ridiculous, pounding noise assault to date. But it proved too much for the cutting room. In its place, "Lower Of Ghast" accumulates a more typical dose of foggy electronics. *(David Keenan)*

## Anal Magic & Reverend Dwight Frieze Reverend Dwight Frieze Black Crack Initiation KOOL CD

To call Reverend Dwight Frieze legendary would be an outright lie, as you would have to have been a member of Nurse With Wound to have even heard of it. Where Paradigm are pulling these re-releases from, we're not sure. But the story goes like this: originally issued in 1976, Reverend Dwight Frieze was a classically American oddball in the style of Jack, or even Henry, Smith & his maker and apparent doctor of metaphysics he recorded *Beyond the Black Crack* in two years on stage and out in the field. It's a patchwork of badly-titled industrial ritual to ex-Hermetas Nitsch, classic private-party psychedelia and apocalyptic occasionally punctuated by the usual jazz occasionally of a stoned Beck-soundlike. Also included are some outtakes and unreleased experiments. Just what you must surely need. *(David Keenan)*

## Rube Enbates ANT-004274 CD

Enbates is a particularly good example of Avium Navena (aka Aubrey's) singer approach to sound: taking simple sonic source material and transforming it into

something completely different. It generally involves the noise and ambience of other Aube releases in form of lengthy looping deformation of cracking, grinding sounds, repeated endlessly and only extremely gradually introduced into new configurations. Two tracks create glowing drones that work particularly well. Whether you find it monotonous or contemplative is down to taste. *(Liz)*

## CO Caspar Thus Long Lights Light KNOX CD98 CD

Here's an oddity. This tremendously eclectic album hops all over the place, remaining self-assured and attentive throughout. "Dodge Blues" uses a houseful for its rumbling, droning sound while "Great Takes" achieves a skanking CD player to locate choral singing, and is rather gorgeous. Two tracks throw some wordy poetry from collaborator Shari. Caten into well-assembled collages of environmental sound, charming motifs, brooding, incoherent-but-a-conversation, and burred melodies. "Special Last Of Heavens" combines SO mechanically blown pipes into a dense cluster of drones, building to a shrill climax. You'd never know that Caspar was a 65 year old (believe it if you weren't told). He has an open minded and contemporary ear for sound that's many younger musicians should envy.

## John Duncan Mort Aux Vaches SEK STIMULANT NO NUMBER CD

It's a pity that none of Duncan's records manage to evoke the sense of danger inherent in one notorious art performance, where the naked artist wielded his good acquaintances at night, shooting them in close range with bullets when they answered the door. But much of his music is overtly menacing, and Sek especially recorded for a Dutch radio show is no exception. Duncan sculpts radio waves static and white noise into undulating currents of malignant electric sound. Drones and an occasional rhythmic match *Sollupsteppa* — see below — sound for sound (albeit with a greater sense of development), while one unified track is near enough to silence to give radio broadcasters palpitations.

## Eriyas Manhattan Dwelling isco FLY CD

New York resident Gerald Saunders takes sound recordings from his surroundings in Manhattan and Long Island, and then heads them out and stretches them out into stuffily gloomy musique concrete. It's like

listening to the city from underneath a drainage grate or from inside a ventilation shaft: everything is washed out by cacophonous reverberation or distorted into clouds of undifferentiated din. Occasionally there's some respite, but if it were the sound of the city I lived in, I'd move out fast.

## Mathias Grassow Hemavat STARKORN FLY CD

If I had a penny for every post-New Age album of spiritually influenced drone to come through my door, I'd have, well, about \$1.36. There's not a great deal to separate Hemavat from anyone else with a few gongs, singing bowls, flute, assorted percussion instruments and synthesizers (only the lowest eight keys tapped, of course). Here as with comparable musicians, spirituality is a state of suspension where there might occasionally be a bit of discordance, but certainly never anything approaching disruption. It's all very well executed — and thoroughly redundant.

## Klangkrieg Das Fieber Des Metaphysischen Stimme Audiotape Audiotape CD

These youthful German musicians shed any last hint of post-industrial influence in favour of a more academic approach to ambient music. Das Fieber presents new varied works derived from vocal sounds, and as with much computer music, it often comes over more like a technical exercise than anything else. The lengthy title track is the highlight, a tour de force of sonic deconstruction: miming its sounds into squeaky little bubbles, groans and rumbles, then mutuating them into intricate webs of metallic chimes and peeping drones. Unfortunately the remaining pieces are much the same, and too much technological tinkering soon grows cold and uninviting.

## Mnemonists Florida its rev CD

When it first came out in 1981, I'm told, *Mnemonists* was some kind of post-Faust classic, a free-for-all tape collage from a group of Colorado artists, whose musicians later continued as Better. It had everything: freaky noise loops, scuzz-jazz squawking, blindingly improviz electronics, tonalistic ambience and some strange abuse. It flows together happily thanks to some meticulous editing, but for all its ambition, it hasn't aged particularly well. The willingness to veer beyond boundaries, tone and conventional structure mark it out as a thing of vision. It's just a pity that the overall sound is so muddy and directionless.

## Stillupsteppa Mort Aux Vaches STIMULANT NO NUMBER CD

Islanders exiled in Holland, *Sollupsteppa* became increasingly difficult to pin down, with the limited edition issue of yet another Dutch radio broadcast. Their original avant-rank endeavours have been replaced with an

exploration of subtle ambience and Pan Sonic-style minimal electronics. The pops clicks, drone and tones also echo Ryoji Kaida and there's a surrealism and restraint here that I find particularly inviting. When environmental sounds intrude on the final track, the varied palette confirms that *Sollupsteppa* are ones to watch.

## Summer Crane/Mark Cunningham/Don Burg John Giovanni — An Opera ATAWACK AUTP CD

With ex-AMM members like Florio and Arto Lindsay, plus Andy's brother Duncan, playing bit part strings and percussion, Summer Crane's post-Mars project was as close as NYC No Wave got to a supergroup. The irony of musicians who once subjected punk to vicious barbed wire whappings for being too rock now doing an opera is only so captivating. Great too: No Wave Crane performs his own libretto — a modernist distortion of Mozart's Don Giovanni — in a rock opera format accompanied himself on three string guitar, piano and percussion. The differing snippets of below ex-Mortaux Burg and Cunningham grease Crane's slide into Alfred Jarry absurdity. *(Bibo Kato)*

## Eugene Thacker Sketches For Biometric Research INITIATION KNOX CD

Body music with a difference. Though it's influenced both by high tech medicine and by electronic dance tracks, Thacker's take on the relationship between the body and technology results in barely coherent noise compositions. Sourced from a mixture of sampled Techno, anatomical recordings and digital file detritus, Sketched explores the clues underlying the scientific structures we perceive. It's at its best when esophageal thunder is juxtaposed against glitched up Techno or psychotic sine tones. Here, signal and noise become confused, with tooth-jarring consequences. Between these moments, it palls a little, but noise fans should still enjoy it.

## Jörg Thomasias & Doc Wör Mirzan The Sound Of Silver MAGNUM TALIT HEG CD

Doc Wör Mirzan are a 'out' group from Germany whose output ranges from the purely experimental through to industrial rock, often with a hint of jukebox whirring. Thomasias is an East German electronic experimenter, with a taste for abstraction. *The Sound Of Silver* sounds like nothing I'd heard from either before, taking radiant, luscious metallic sound waves and shaping them into webs of churning loops and beating drones. The dazzling chords of "Silver" are very 60s, in a squally, squally way, while "Silver" manages to drag groaning angst out of the stew. The whole album showcases two imaginative talents working well together.

# the compiler

New compilations: reviewed, rated, reviled

**A**s the force behind *Company*, the original ad-hoc improvising event, Derek Bailey spoke of the need for difficulty, "for something to work through." Struggle and antinomies integrate such open-ended projects. Despite the presence of 17 musicians on **The Improvisation Meeting in Chicago** (Radio Off Duty LFQR779 CD), activities are disappointingly homogenous. These Chicagoans, plus Japanese visitors Masahiko Ohtsuka and Tada Sugimoto, revoice their musical cultural differences rather too amicably in cautious, quiet, slowly evolving passages. Despite the participation of notable idiosyncrasies like Kenji Drummer, Jim O'Rourke, David Grubbs and Fred Lonergan-Holm, little in their workmanlike collective consciousness leaps out.

**Fear No Fall** (Lowlands LWO113 CD) documents the 1997 Klezmer Festival in Leuven, Belgium where another specially assembled panel of musicians again performed in various combinations. Alongside the ubiquitous Jim O'Rourke are Toshimori Kondo, Zeena Parkins, David Shea, Dirk Wächter and OJ Lowe. Here, a greater sense of surprise balances acerbic, acerbic levels of inventiveness, which are part and parcel of improvisors taking risks. Parkins and O'Rourke's electric hand and guitar add delectable drones and listless note bending before fragmenting into atmospheric swishes of Hermonia and shortwave radio, and O'Rourke's duet with Shea's jaw's harp has a lonesome Fry Cooder-like quality. With Wächter, Kondo gets tangled up in some directionless electric trumpet booms, but on the lengthy second piece, which ranges from impressionistic chamber music to dense free rock, he unravels some languorous lines.

Hairs-Bare certainly knew a thing or two about difficulty. On the run from the Nazis the communist composer took refuge in Hollywood, until McCarthy's witch hunts chased him back to East Berlin. **Go On An Longuevoye: Montage To Henri Estier** (No Men's Land NPL9525 CD) offers an unpredictable set of new interpretations of Estier's eclectic collaborations dating from the 30s to the 50s. "Our Burningsong" (1955) is a piece of eerie electronics with three vocalists singing in unison. The socialist anthem "Solidarität" gets a reggae treatment, while the brief "Nach Estier's Sonchörner" is infused against radio noise. "Der Plausenbaum" (1951) has True Arnold's vocal set against heavily distorted bass guitar and electronics.

From Baker on the left the match backwards through time taken to the right, with **Futurismo** (P22 005 CD) which offers a fairly unremarkable series of interpretations of Futurist ideas on music. XUV's "The Typewriter" and John Avery Baker's "Carnival Musicians" have a pleasant retro quality but lack any real dynamism. Elsewhere, film projections when synthesized voices babble while insects and birds carry on noisily, but it's hard to believe that Futurism would ever have celebrated itself with so little boldness of purpose. Challenging itself by nature.

**Breakmade Records**, founded by The Piccolo Fink's Yasuhiro Kondo, brings you **Tokyo - The Renewer** (Bangalore BUNG053 CD), a lighter than air excursion through the label's back catalogue. The highlights are the reworkings of themes and incidental music from Lupin III: the long-running animation series by top manga artist Monkey Punch. A clutch of Pizzicato Five numbers are also given a respectful spin and pedal, still leaving enough room for some tag-team rough housing with Plastic Fantastic Machine and 5th Garden. For color girls and melon boys everywhere. Enough sweetness and light. Let's get back to noisy. The compilation from Berlin-based **Biophilic Artists** (Lux Naga LP01 CD) patches together 18 tracks from 15 artists operating across the spectrum of new electronics. An edgy tanning up of fresh ideas, genre grifts and like moves, it centres around a mutual appreciation of circuit-benchman (Biochip) C. Highlights include Soni Suburbies' CD Tracks reverencing itself via the undermaster emblem of "Changing Trains At Bank", the digital sizzle of Kish Snares, Chris & Paul's caustic don't "It's best, and the crunchy Electro of Immort's "Spout Child".

The credibility of the Canterbury scene, once the unsullied corner of British Prog, is under attack from marketing types swooning onto a newly identified niche in the nostalgia racket. With **Canterburied Sounds Volume 1** (Vincepent VP201 CD), Brian Hough (Hug's not very well known brother, acting as Canterbury curator) has unearthed pre-Soft Machine juvenilia by Robert Wyatt, Hugh Hopper, Mike Ratledge and Kevin Ayers, plus sundry other performers. Soulist quality is inexorable and the music is mostly embarrassing. But "Plan In A Deal Corner" and "Believe Paradise" (both circa 1962-64) are historically important as early examples of British free jazz. **Reviewed by Chris Davidson, Andy Hamilton, Ken Hollings and David Howell**

# directory

Labels, distributors and contacts

## Labels

**KEY:** T = Tel; F = Fax; E = Email; W = Website; D = distributor

**AKA** c/o WEA Japan/D Greyhound  
**Alchemist** 611 Surrey Drive, Colchester, MA 02025 USA T 001 800 292 6932 D New Note  
**Alli City** 2414 Mehl Chicago IL 60647, USA D Corgi  
**Ani-Zen** c/o Ursprungstrasse 7A, 93049 Regensburg Germany F 0049 941 24867 E [ani-zen@regensburg.net](mailto:ani-zen@regensburg.net)  
**Alvaristo** PO Box 578266 Chicago IL 60657-8266 USA D SRD  
**Atlantis** 34 South Mallon Street London W1Y 2BP D WEA  
**Atrium** see Warner's  
**Audioview** see Lowlands  
**AUP Fidelity** PO Box 170147 Brooklyn NY 11217 USA F 001 718 369 0981 E [info@audiufidelity.com](mailto:info@audiufidelity.com)  
**Avanti** Desk-Union 2-3 Kanda Aoyachi, Chiyoda-ku Tokyo 101-0063 Japan D Harmonia Mundi  
**Birdman** 1409 W Magnolia Boulevard Burbank CA 91506 USA D Corgi  
**Blas First** see Mute  
**Blue Note** 818 House, 43 Brook Green, London W6 7EF UK T 01 605 5000 D EPH  
**Blue Snow** T 0467 810560  
E [blue.snow@btopenworld.com](mailto:blue.snow@btopenworld.com)  
**Bungalow** Suite 205, 44 Bruden Road, London SW18 9EP F 0171 733 9060 D Vial  
**Captain Tric** 1-17-14 Minami-Kosai, Etchujima-ku Tokyo Japan F 00 81 33 659 5169  
**CBS** see Columbia  
**Cien/Silence** W [www.grooves.com/wenp9303](http://www.grooves.com/wenp9303)  
**Circulations Totale** (Gandevise 15 4017) **Stranger** Germany F 00 47 51 5860 81 E [info@circulations.com](mailto:info@circulations.com)  
**Columbia** 10 Great Marlborough Street London W1Y 5AN D Sony  
**Decca** 22 St Peter's Square London W6 9HW F 0181 910 3132 D PolyGram  
**Denmark** 4121 N Rockwell Chicago IL 60618 USA T 01 773 539 5004 E [denmark@immediateonline.com](mailto:denmark@immediateonline.com)  
D One's Two  
**Delphiborough Trade Germany** Eichele Strasse 25, D-46030 Herne, Germany F 00 49 23 25 72 22  
**Disko B/V2** Lindnerstrasse 71, D-80337 München, Germany F 00 49 89 543 8441 W [www.diskob.com](http://www.diskob.com) D 3M/Pennacle  
**Dovino** PO Box 40229, London SW15 2XR F 01 875 1391 D Vial  
**DTX Records** 5050 Buckingham Parkway #406, Culter City CA 90230, USA

E [dtx1300@aol.com](mailto:dtx1300@aol.com)  
**Empire** Joen/Trance Syndicate PO Box 49777 Austin Texas 78765 USA D SRD  
**Epa Tiptoe** Pathways Workmanlike GmbH, PO Box 190333, D-80603 Munich Germany D New Note/Pennacle  
**EOS** 28 Blythwood Road London N4 4 EU  
**Erol** F 00 49 221 95 25 421 D Vial  
**Extreme** PO Box 147 Preston 3072 Victoria Australia F 00 61 3 9419 4086 E [extremed@net.com](mailto:extremed@net.com)  
**Fat Cat** 81-79 Rangier Place London EC2A 3BA F 01 719 3517 D SRD  
**Fax** c/o EHC Distribution Redmühlstrasse 19 D-51184 Karben, Germany F 00 49 6039 931566 E [thehub@unipoint.de](mailto:thehub@unipoint.de)  
**FIP** PO Box 100227 D-10562 Berlin, Germany F 00 49 30 394 203 D Cadillac  
**Foghorn** 2 View Tree Crossings, Manor Road Boxford Bucks HP22 4QJ  
**Force Inc** Wessertstrasse 7, 60339 Frankfurt, Germany F 00 49 6 925 2286 E [AC@force-inc.com](mailto:AC@force-inc.com) D SRD  
**For 4 Ears** Scheinweg 16, CH-4452 Ittigen, Switzerland F 00 61 971 8361 D Impetus  
**Freiland** see Kompakt  
**Harmonicle** see Occia  
W [www.harmonicle.com](http://www.harmonicle.com)  
**Harmonia Mundi** see Distributors Harmonia Mundi  
**Hatology** Box 521 4020 Basel, Switzerland F 00 42 61 373 0774 D Harmonia Mundi  
**Hercules** c/o Newagen Music Information Centre, Tollatz 28, 01575 Dietz, Norway F 00 47 2242 9090  
**Imp** E [imp@newagen.no](mailto:imp@newagen.no)  
**Impetus** see Distributors Impetus  
**Innova** 332 Minnesota St, E-145, Saint Paul MN 55101 USA F 001 651 228 1407 E [innova@compuserve.com](mailto:innova@compuserve.com)  
**Intoxia** 2-9-8 #202 Asagaya-Kita, Sagami, Tokyo 166-0001 Japan T 03 333-7829 E [innova@newagen.com](mailto:innova@newagen.com) D Harmonia Mundi  
**Intuition** PO Box 270126, D-50508 Cologne Germany F 00 49 221 951414 E [info@compuserve.com](mailto:info@compuserve.com) D New Note  
**J&K Productions** PO Box 902097, 1090 AB Amsterdam The Netherlands  
**Jumbo Recordings** 138 First Avenue, New York, NY 10009 USA E [cdsm@jumborec.com](mailto:cdsm@jumborec.com)  
E [cdsm@jumborec.com](mailto:cdsm@jumborec.com)  
**Kan** 5, Impasse Des Minimes, 87100 Limoges, France F 00 33 05 55 71 43 05 E [kan@jumborec.com](mailto:kan@jumborec.com)  
**Kompakt** Brabantstrasse 42 50673 Köln, Germany F 00 49 221 257 8742 E [kom@compuserve.com](mailto:kom@compuserve.com) D Diklak  
**Leaf** Suite 209, 444 Bruden Road London SW18 9EP F 01 71 733 5818 D SRD  
**Leo** The Cottage 6 Anerley Hill, London SE19



**2A, UK** F0181 659 6422  
**Islands/Islands.co.uk** D: Cielic Impetus These  
**Lowlands** Houtstraat 6, 2000 Antwerp,  
 Belgium F00 32 3226 1527  
**Islands/Islands.be**

**Mantra** 17-19 Almo Road, London, SW8  
 1AA F0181 871 1766 D: Visa/WEA  
**Marginal Talent** Elfringer Strasse 7 90765  
 Fürth, Germany

**Material Sound** Via Tre Novembre 2, 52027 Sen  
 Giovanni Valdarno, Italy F00 39  
 051 912 0370 E: material@materialsona  
 .it D: Cargo

**MOG** Musikproduktion Dabringhaus und  
 Grimm, Bachstrasse 35, D-32756 Detmold,  
 Germany F00 49 5231 26186  
**Mogo** Bauer KEG Ruckelshausen T021+22  
 A-1120 Vienna, Austria F00 43 1 817 14  
 788 E: info@mogo.at W: www.mogo.at  
 D: These

**Melior** PO Box 270, Preston, Lancs PR2 3LZ  
 F01772 866178 E: E:leider@enterprise.net  
**Milan** D: BMG/Conifer

**Mile Plateaux** See Force Inc.  
**Mit Oude Sound** Formic, Brusselsestrasse  
 75, 50612 Cologne, Germany F00 49 221  
 95 25 421 E: formic@mitnet.net

**Musikland International** Paul-Landau-Str. 44A,  
 D-10759 Berlin, Germany F00 49 30 611  
 30169 D: SRO

**Muskey Music** 246 Route 306, Monrovia, NY  
 10952 USA F001 914 425 8944  
 E: monrovia@optonline.com

**Musik** Höringer Strasse 18, D-83022  
 Rialtheim, Germany F00 49 83 31 831  
 40

**NPS** Rosengarth Hinton Road Houghton-Le-  
 Spring, Tyne & Wear DH5 5JN F0191 584  
 4145 E: C:ukman@npsdirect.com D: Impetus

**Plute/Plute Bank** 429 Harrow Road, London  
 W10 4RE F0181 960 5459  
 W: www.plutebank.com D: Vital

**Nimbus** Weylstraße 145, Monmouth NPS 35R  
 F0160 892119 D: Nimbus  
**Ninja Tune/Wave** PO Box 4296, London  
 SE1 9BZ F0171 37 397 7197  
 E: nintatune@nintatune.com D: Vital

**No Flair's** Ländstrasse 33, D-12249 Berlin  
 F00 49 30 427 9532  
 E: noflair@online-berlin.de D: ReR

**Ochre** PO Box 155, Cheltenham, Glos GL51  
 0Y5 D: SRO  
**Ohm Editions/Avator** 541 Saint-Vallier Est  
 #4, Québec, QC Canada G1K 3P9 F01  
 418 522 6412 E: avator@ohmeditions.org

**Output** co Universal, See Deca  
**Output** PO Box 16628, London N1 7WE  
 F0171 684 8877 D: SRO

**Paradigm** Ruit 9, Thane Mansions, Thane  
 Villas, London N1 9PE D: Harmonia Mundi  
**Pax Recordings** PO Box 697, Pacific Grove  
 CA93950 USA E: pax@earthlink.net

**Planetix** PO Box 276, Worcester WR5 2E  
 D: SRO  
**Polydor** See Deca

**P22** PO Box 770, Buffalo, NY 14213 USA F  
 001 716 885 4490 E: p22@p22.com  
**Pussyfoot** 43-44 Horton Sq, London, N1  
 6PB F0171 729 7400

E: info@pussyfoot.co.uk D: BMV/Wennade  
**Radio Off Duty** co Box Media, 1000 N  
 Main, Chubb, Chubb, 06062, USA F001  
 312 943 3399 E: p22@radiooffduty.com

**Real World** Box, Corsham, Wiltshire SN13  
 8PL D: Virgin/EMI  
**Rectangle** 39 Rue Remponeau, 75020  
 Paris, France

**ReR** **ReR** **ReR** **ReR** **ReR** **ReR** **ReR** **ReR** **ReR** **ReR**  
**Review Records** Graessmattstrasse 33, D-  
 10249 Berlin, Germany F00 49 30  
 4279532 E: N:lp@review-records.de D: ReR

**River** 10635, Santa Monica Boulevard, Los  
 Angeles, CA 90025-4900, USA W  
 www.river.com D: WEA

**ROIR** 611 Broadway, Suite 411, New York  
 NY 10012 USA F001 212 505 9908  
 D: Shellstock

**Rykodisc** 78 Stanley Gardens, London W3  
 7SZ F0181 964 2989 D: Cargo  
**Shriml** PO Box 1837, Upland, CA91785  
 USA

**Sigma Editions** co Synthespina PO Box  
 7252 Melbourne, Vic 3004 Australia  
 E: sigma@sigmadisc.net

**Silbreeze** 727 South 7th St, Philadelphia,  
 PA 19147 USA D: Cargo  
**Smells Like Records** PO Box 6179  
 Hoboken, NJ 07030 USA D: Cargo

**Southdown** PO Box 83296 Portland  
 Oregon 97283-0296 USA F001 503 335  
 0805 W: www.southdown.com D: These

**G3 Records** 8 Park Quadrant, Glasgow,  
 G3 8BF F0141 353 2881  
 E: g3records@nirvanadisc.com D: These

**Space Age Recordings** PO Box 8, Corby  
 Northants NN17 2XZ F01536 266246  
 D: SRO

**Stakes** PO Box 229 Blackburg, Virginia  
 24061-0229 USA D: Cargo  
**Steatplate** PO Box 11453, 1001 GL  
 Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
 E: steatplate@netherlands.com D: These

**Stingsome** Lieve De Winestraat 34,  
 8700D Gennep, Belgium E: louse@stingsome.be  
 D: Lowlands

**Stems** 14-75 Warren Street, London W1P  
 5PA F0171 388 2756 D: Stems  
**Sweet Finger** Unit 1, New Square Units  
 King's Square, Bristol BS2 8JJ D: Cargo

**Taxi** Motal Davidson 796, A-1100  
 Vienna, Austria F00 43 1 602 6945  
 E: taximotal@p3.or.at

**Tesco Organization** co Kishi  
 Holtenstrasse 8 69469 Sulzbach,  
 Germany E: tesco-organization@t-online.de  
 D: Lowlands

**Taxi** 61 East 8th Street, #126, New York  
 NY 10003 USA E: taxi@taxi.co.uk  
 W: www.taxi.co.uk D: Cargo

**Vague Terrain** W: www.vague.org D: (R)OCC  
 reviews: Henri D: Cargo  
**Verve** See Deca  
**VIRG** 5519 Harrow Road, London W10  
 4TH D: EMI

**Voiceprint** PO Box 52, Houghton-Le-Spring,  
 Tyne & Wear DH4 5YF E: voiceprint.co.uk

W: www.voiceprint.co.uk D: Vital  
**Warrers** Warner Building, 28 Kensington  
 Church Street, London W8 6EP D: WEA

**Warp** The Ballroom, Coverhill Buildings,  
 210-218 West Street, Sheffield S1 4EU  
 F0114 2481 2002 D: Vital

**Worm Interface** 4 Berwick Street, London  
 W1V 3RG F0171 434 3072  
 E: worm@worminterface.co.uk D: Kudos

**XI Records** PO Box 1754, Canal St Station,  
 New York, NY 10013 USA F001 212 645  
 0298 E: XIRecords@compuserve.com

## UK Distributors

**Cadillac** 61-71 Collier Street, London N1  
 9DF F0171 278 7394  
**Cargo** The Studio, Edith Villas, Bective Road  
 London SW15 2QJ F0181 875 9227  
 E: info@cargo.london.co.uk

**Direct/Topic** 30 Stroud Green Road, London  
 N4 3EF F0171 281 5671  
**EMI** Hermes House, Tachbrook Park  
 Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV34 6RP  
 F01926 466300

**Greyhound** 130A Plough Road, London  
 SW11 2AA F0171 924 1471  
**Harmonia Mundi** 19-21 Nile Street, London  
 N1 7UL F0171 253 3237  
 E: info@harmomundi.com

**Ideal** Grist Lane, 25B Vyner Street,  
 London E3 9QG F0181 257 3358  
**Impetus** 10 High Street, Skagenia Ness, Isle  
 Of Lewis, Outer Hebrides HS2 0T5 F0185  
 810809

**Kudos** 79 Fortress Road, London NW5 1AG  
 F0171 482 4555 F0171 482 4551  
**New Note** Unit 2, Orpington Trading Estate,  
 Sevenoaks Way, St Mary Cray, Orpington,  
 Kent BR5 3SR F01689 877891

**Pinnacle** Erection House, Cray Avenue, St  
 Mary Cray, Orpington, Kent BR5 3PN  
 F01689 878269

**Polygram** Chipperton House, Kingston,  
 Milton Keynes, MK18 0AN F0181 91D  
 1500 F01906 452 600

**ReR** 79 Beulah Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey  
 CR7 8JG F0181 771 3138  
**Ermosmoflora** 23A Colingwood Road, London  
 N15 4LD F0181 800 8140  
 E: info@ermosmoflora.co.uk

**Sony** Returns Line, Aylesbury, Bucks HP19  
 3BK F01296 426151 F01296 481009  
**SRO** 10 Lawrence Road, London N15 6EG  
 F0181 802 8222

W: www.southdown.com D: (R)OCC  
**These** 12 Brook Drive, London SE11 4TQ  
 F0171 582 5278

**WMP** 81-83 Weston Street, London SE1  
 7D171 378 8866  
**Vital** 3384 Ludbrook Grove, London W10  
 5AH F0181 324 0001

**WEA** PO Box 59, Alpertown Lane, Alpertown,  
 Wembley, Middlesex HA9 1FJ F0181 998  
 3429

AD labels and distributors: If you got an incorrect or  
 missing listing in this column, please contact The Wire

## label lore

Nov 029



### material sonori

Address: Via Tre Novembre 2, 52027 Sen  
 Giovanni Valdarno, Italy Tel 00 39  
 051 943888 Fax 00 39 051 952 912  
 0370 E-mail: material@materialsona.it  
 Web: www.materialsona.it

UK Distribution: Cargo

Run by: Giampaolo Bazzoli

**Roster includes:** The Duvets, Clouds,  
 Tuscanos, Third Eye Band, David  
 Sylvian, Jon Hassel, Nazim Fathi Al  
 Khan, Harold Budd, Roccobelli, David  
 Torn, John Oswald, Henry Kozar and  
 more plus various compilation series

**Description:** Small hybrid melting pot of  
 international alternative music

**Brief history:** Founded in 1977 in Sen  
 Giovanni Valdarno, Tuscany. From  
 the beginning, the label made clear  
 its opinion towards contemporary

and electronic music, experimental  
 rock, ethnic, and music without  
 boundaries, aiming to be mainly  
 instrumental, but also including  
 poetic texts, theatre and film  
 soundtracks, highbrow and  
 postmodern music. Our first discs  
 were released with some of the most  
 important artists on the international  
 avant garde scene. Over the years,  
 we have kept on releasing high quality  
 productions with bigger names like  
 Sylvian, Budd and Eno. The most  
 recent projects have also involved  
 stars such as Bill Laswell, Thurston  
 Moore of Sonic Youth, Evan Parker,  
 Philip Glass and John Zorn

**Statements:** of intent: Going beyond  
 fashion and stereotypes

**Other activities:** We are very active in the  
 promotion of our artists, organizing or  
 taking part in important music  
 festivals. As far as the domestic and  
 international distribution is concerned,  
 many people visit our website, where it  
 is also possible to place orders.  
 Another important channel of  
 distribution is the Big Catalogue, our  
 mail order catalogue which is sent out  
 to thousands of customers

**Future plans:** Percy Howard collaboration  
 with Vernon Reid of Living Colour and  
 Trey Gunn of King Crimson, a work by  
 Gavin Bryars performed by Harmonia,  
 our chamber duo. A CD book  
 dedicated to Brian Eno, which will be  
 available in March

**Choice cuts:** John Zorn Sonoro: Thurston  
 Moore/Evan Parker/Walter Pratt: The  
 Promise

Words and music by: Giampaolo Bazzoli



operation *Psychic TV*. Ford details a number of significant COMU performances, culminating in a 1977 piece in the US, which was described as 'stomach churning and disgusting' by Chris Burden. Coming from the artist who nailed himself to a car, it was quite an accolade.

Ford deftly drops in indicators of changing times, such as when the Arts Council—which had earlier counted COUM—refused to pay them the second half of a grant, "because their work was not 'accessible'."

The TG story is illustrated throughout with quotations from the music press which indicate how the group polarised the critics as much as the public. The *NME* was almost invariably opposed, ironically regarding the group as 'art school'. They weren't! But Paul Morley had the courage to change his mind on the group, writing them a favourable obituary when they parted company.

Ford himself eschews the critic's role. Instead he simply documents the performances and the releases, alongside the group's own comments. But much like TG's work, the true wealth of which emerges with repeated listenings, Ford's book is sensitive, fascinating and always smarter than it first appears.

DEN WATSON



### Can Box: Book

By Hildegard Schmidt & Volker Kammann

REGULAR MUSIC BOOKS \$5.95-9.95

its complete form. On Box, all content is live double CD and a video content alongside the generically named Box. Amazingly, the live recording will be their first unless you count Peel seasons released for a group whose early careers are as legendary as The Grateful Dead's is still ongoing. The same goes for the video which has been held up by problems clearing film rights. So for the time being, the one available compilation of Can manager Hildagard Schmidt's rather grand but less than vital work can only hope to be the worst – the Box, which is as poorly conceived, produced and executed as the Can CD reissue programme originated by Spion. For a group whose legend is closely controlled by their own management, their output has been criminally shoddy. Obviously a touch of love on Schmidt's part, the conclusion must be that she is seriously overrated.

The book might look big, but its content

thems to a third of its size as soon as you move to the strip and discuss the texts are published in French. German and English (the exceptions are the German only analyses of "Peking D." and the two sets of comic commentaries in English by The Mews Rob Young and longtime Can associate Duncan Fallwell). The book is mostly given over to individual interviews with Can's core four members — no Hagen/Moore or Dörrie/Suzuki here — and one group discussion conducted by Josef Spiegel. As manager/keeper of the Can legend and this edition's co-author and editor, Hildgards also interviewed several important names: her co-author, the already mentioned Fallwell; Gabriele Thiering, author of the history by Gabriele Thiering; interview Wolf Kampmann's "Can-Vision: chasing the music's afterlife, and the various endorsements of Can remasters and prestigious fans scattered throughout.

In essence, then, this is a fairly book about a group for whom the very notion might be to be a contradiction in terms. At the very least, this is a fan would expect it to advance on Pascal Bussey's earlier book by being as seriously engaging in content as its subject's music. But both Kampornem's introduction and virus check and Heerding's history are more concerned with selecting endorsements of Can's importance than realistically accounting for it. In Kampornem's assessment, Can have contaminated just about every hip musical manifestation on the side of the Great Wall of China, but he neither backs up his claims nor explores their consequences.

Can we find redress by looking at the unwelcome of the individual members' personalities with that crucial moment in West Germany's development when the post-war generation took issue with its hollow cultural legacy, while reconciling it with their enthusiasm for happenings elsewhere in Paris, New York (I want to read *The Velvet Underground*) and London (the UFO club)? Some of this complex and fascinating story emerges from the interviews, along with a sense of the personal differences that first gave the group its character and then tore it apart. That the group in interview are far more thoughtful and insightful on the subject of Can than they are in the songs is a pity, as album commentaries are a source of frustration because, pulled four ways, the story is at once apologetic and resistant to coherence.

The bittersweet of Fallowell and Young's parallel annotated discographies doesn't really permit them to draw the story together: either Bob egotistic and Fallowell's personal reflections give a flavour of the period when the records were made, but precious little illumination. Bob Young's late 1980s/early 90s perspective is fine in itself, but it modestly serves the fiction, wedded in the verbiage, that Can's value is primarily measured in its influence on the present. How the group, in their own small yet significant way, participated in rock's attempt at altering the flow of history remains unexplored.

**USA KSP**

### Roots Of The Moment

By Pauline Oliveros  
DEQUE BOOKS, PAGE 535

Three hummings about Rosalind Oliveto: In 1964 she performed her composition, *Duo For Baritone And Accordion* on a seasaw with David Tudor accompanied by a mynah bird. Two years later she composed the piece *Q Q W V Q Q W V Q Q W V Q Q W V Q Q W V* (she lost count and later found a fifth piece after already having numbered the series) for The sleeve of the compilation album *New Music For Electronic And Recorded Media* (1977) she submitted a photo of a balding, mustachioed man in a dinner jacket signed, "Best wishes, Rosalind Oliveto."

Diverts to a serious composer who does not lose herself too seriously. She even debates whether she is a composer. "How can you call yourself a composer when you have no score?" — so perhaps author, performer and teacher might be more apt. She is nonplussed by the academic musical establishment and (as a consequence?) has largely been overlooked in terms of her place in post-50s American cultural history. She was there at the beginning of West Coast electronic and Minimalist music, with classmates including Terry Riley and Morton Subotnick, and was a pioneer in the field of tape delay processes culminating in her *Extended Instrument*.

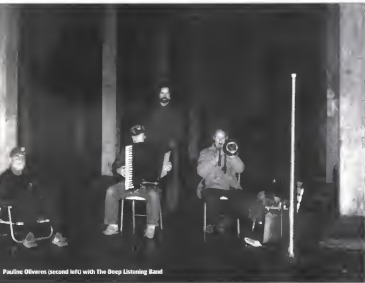
has blossomed from sporadic and difficult to get hold of to fairly prolific.

*Rashts Of The Moment* is a collection of Olvera's writings since 1981. It includes a manifesto, essays, concrete poems and her own inimitable brand of scores. The text is divided not so much in linear fashion but simultaneously on each page. Thus, her 'manifesto' if you will, runs along the top, an account of the technical processes involved in her music. Its centre-a page, poems and anecdotes line the margins. Sometimes they overlap, referring to each other. This is at best fun and refreshing; at worst imitating and rather unnecessary. Does Olvera answer?

Oliveros's music is less about performing and more — much more — about listening. The term *Deep Listening* is the focus of Oliveros's life and work, and is described (all over the place) in some depth: "Deep listening is listening in every possible way to every thing possible to hear no matter what you are doing." It gets pretty deep in a poem called *Listen* we are invited to "listen / not with your ears but with your eyeballs" (!) There is also some, though not much, discussion of the obvious therapeutic qualities of her music; the book is in fact dedicated to "the sounds that heal."

Four of the poems reproduced in the book are also featured – expanded and embellished – on an accompanying CD titled *HörSpiele (EarPlay)*. Three were recorded for Westdeutscher Rundfunk in Cologne, the fourth for New American Radio. Oliveira's minimalist poetry is an acquired taste, and I confess to not having acquired it. Hamsayun's *Tomb*, for example, plays on six words: *Mind Sound, Inside Outside Love and Change*. After 20 minutes of hearing these words in





Pauline Oliveros (second left) with The Deep Listening Band

every conceivable combination the urge to shout 'Stop!' becomes overwhelming.

Books Of The Moment is fun to dip into, but not quite substantial enough to satisfy any craving for a deep understanding of Oliveros's work. That would be best written by someone other than herself, as I'm sure she'd agree. For a cheaper, more accessible introduction you could do worse than visit her Website at [www.deeplistening.org](http://www.deeplistening.org) or backtrack to Richard Henderson's excellent article on her in the *Wire* 164.

DAVID ELIOTT

## John Barry: A Life In Music

By Geoff Leonard, Pete Walkley & Gareth Bearmley  
SANDY & CO ISBN 124 99

Books are timed to a slower track than music and fashion. Four years after *Easy Listening* brought you the kitsch surrealism of Mike Flowers' *Kenny Rogers Team and Pizzicato Five* — all in debt to John Barry's pizzicato stringbeats and the sublime twang of his James Bond theme — a tribute and discography finally appears in print.

The three authors are qualified fans. Though they don't indulge Nick Hornby-like confessions, there are glimpses of their backgrounds. Christmas 1960 in the school playground and one fan is ashamed that 'lovely Patsy' (i.e. a Christmas Street) by Adam Faith with 'accompaniment and children

directed by John Barry' is so tedious compared to the seasonal competition from Cliff Richard. But The John Barry Seven come second only to The Shadows in the end of year music press polls as a source of pride. They triumphantly point out that Barry's soundtrack for *The Amorous Prawn* used cash registers in the rhythm section. 11 years before Pink Floyd's *Money*. They go on to note Barry's choices on *Desert Island Discs* (1967): Prokofiev (twice), Stan Kenton, Mahler, The Koolhaas Girls' Choir, Shostakovich, Bartok. Finally, they credit the standing ovations at Barry's 1998 comeback concert at the Royal Albert Hall.

Fans love records, the holy bauble of their chosen communion. A meticulous discography occupies 30 dense pages of this 230 page book. The text itself recalls the species of obsessive catalogue rationale favoured by Record Collector. Lacking the biographer's wit or means — to get behind the scenes, the book becomes a litany of film and soundtrack releases, the non-appearance of the 'disco version of a film's theme on a soundtrack album's taken CD release merits more attention than moments like the sound of 'Christie' the single by Miss X (Joey Blair) which Barry released in July 1963 to comment on the Profumo affair. Banned by both the BBC and Radio Luxembourg it got to number 37 on white label. 'It got well around. So much so that word-of-mouth recommendation' The B-side was named 'S-E-X' (a title misused by another knowing scandal-monger Malcolm



McLaren for a *Wow Wow Wow* record. It's the comeliest, each and every release is a crucial part of the mosaic.

The authors marshal no evidence to shake the thesis that in his early soundtracks and singles — the James Bond theme, *The Assassins*, *The Devils*, *The Assassins*, *The Devils* — Barry combined classical strings and raw guitar in a way that previewed the garish amorality of the 60s but in later decades parlayed his success into becoming a *disco* filmmaker, but unrepentant film composer. That that Barry ever had his sources, Henry Mancini's 'Peter Gunn', Nelson Riddle's 'Unsub', Duke Ellington's 'Relax', and Stan Kenton's brass voicings. The authors' belief in Barry's compositing genius implies ignorance of the classical

genre. To call his *The Six Of Time* from 1966 'a score whose grandeur and emotional depth rival the best of the great romantic composers' is technically accurate, but fails to acknowledge that in conceptualising the best (or most effective) moments of symphonic music, Barry degrades romanticism's musical argument and reduces its expressive integrity to kitsch.

The book closes in Barry's 1998 Albert Hall comeback. To rise to the majesty of the occasion the authors call in reinforcements, a rave review by Caitlin Moran reprinted from *The Times* their colourful burst of It Girl journalism reminds us what a grey slog the book has been. She makes the grand claim which the authors' eyes down on tracklists and catalogue numbers, lack the cultural purview to make. For Moran this concert — introduced by Michael Caine and conducted by Barry himself — was a triumph for the only British composer to rival The Beatles for genius. She turns it into a flagwaving celebration of Britpop (she traces Blur's 'Sing' back to *The Assassins* and the orchestration of *Pulp*). This is Henderson to Barry's film scores. The photograph of Barry in a hat bowing to the Queen, starts to make sense.

Barry undoubtedly helped shape the national unconscious. In the early 60s he composed jingles for the Milk Marketing Board ('Drink into milk day'), Ingersoll watches and toilet paper 'in fact', declare the authors 'most of the pop culture absorbed Barry's oeuvre during this decade whether conscious of it or not.' However whether one can glorify such services to shifting product with the word *oeuvre* is moot, since the word implies the conscious presentation of artifice, form, an occasion for critical judgment. Barry may have shaped our musical world but we may admire him no more than we admire motorway flyovers and supermarket car parks.

Musicianship has presented many grotesques to the world, but surely the most grotesque is the case of John Barry as a great classical composer. The man responsible for a string of killer singles in the early 60s deserves a better tribute than this — one best expressed here in the painstaking, colour-illustrated discography.

REN WATSON

## Jan Garbarek: Deep Song

By Michael Tucker  
AS NECT 264 112 99

'Jon plays the Himalayas. It's a big big concept of music that he has, said jazz composer George Russell, who worked with Garbarek in the 60s and 70s. Michael Tucker has taken that message to heart. Many bagpipes — including many entralling ones — have kicked off with their subject's date and place of birth details. Tucker is unusual in holding back on them until page 100. But then more than half the book isn't directly about Garbarek at all.

That results from Tucker's sensible belief

but Garbarek's amalgam of jazz and World Music can't be understood outside a wider cultural context. But his response is a massive referential overload, covering influences that are either tenuous or non-existent. We are treated, in order of relevance, to discussions about Norwegian culture, German Romantics, artist Caspar David Friedrich and poet Heinrich — TS (but Freud, Auschwitz? The song may be deep, but surely not that deep).

The book reads a massive editorial intervention, both to halve the length and bring some coherence to the story — though chronological, the narrative is constantly hijacked by Tucker's cultural digressions. Nevertheless, he makes some perceptive observations. He recognises that Garbarek's story is inseparable from that of Manfred Eicher's ECM. After all, he's one third of the label's trinity, with Arvo Part and Keith Jarrett (the Father and the Son to Garbarek's Holy Ghost?). He also embodies ECM's Nordic ethos, about which much nonsense has been written, and some of the best parts of Tucker's book are concerned to correct this.

He points out that Garbarek's *Ambient* album *Om* from 1976 "precipitated the first really serious, or rhetorical, desecration of critical reception, not just about Garbarek, but about ECM as a whole". With good reason: a considerable disappointment, I didn't keep the album long. John Fordham's review commented: "One of the most dubious and Godforsaken sounds on the planet is that of Garbarek, the linguist Bergman of the European jazz scene".

Tucker has certainly done his research on critical reception, and it's interesting — up to a point — to read the reviews he refers to. Tucker takes it on himself to respond to that inevitable line of criticism: Fordham

summarised: "He discusses the saxophonist's control of dynamics, his tone rich yet keeping and utterly distinctive. Instead of 'frozen tones', he argues, you might notice the warmth or 'heart' in Garbarek's playing, and a feeling drawn from 'shamanic consciousness in Nordic mythology'".

"To appreciate how much musical and spiritual substance there is within the so-called Nordic atmosphere nonsense that some critics have claimed to disdain," he writes, "one has to cease seeing that work through the filter of a sensibly attuned to jazz. He might well be right, but I'm still not convinced, even though Garbarek deserves credit for his groundbreaking projects whatever you think of it, the concept of *Officum*, the album he made with The Hilliard Ensemble, is entirely original."

Tucker is sensible on the ECM ethos, pointing out the range of the label's output and the generally transparent sound picture it prefers, in contrast to the compressed or hewed dynamics of earlier jazz recordings. "To infer [uniform] musical content from such a [uniform] excellence of recording quality would be simply foolish," he admonishes. Still, the mere aspiration to recording perfection has a vital effect on the music, even if this is more complex than standard criticisms suggest. "The faults of Tucker's book are unusual, in that I haven't come across anything quite like it before. With editing it could have been a worthwhile work on a significant figure. But the referential overload kills it. One reference that Tucker seems to miss, however, is in his own title: 'Deep Song' was recorded by Billie Holiday in 1947. Her version expresses a gloom that not even Garbarek could match."

ANDY HAMILTON



## Grown Up All Wrong

By Robert Christgau

PIRATES WIRE 118 50

Whether you love him or hate him, everyone in the racket owes a debt to Robert Christgau. He may not have been the first rock critic, but he was certainly the first to make a career out of it and he casts a large shadow over all music writers, especially in the US, where he is known as the Dean. A collection of his journalism, *Grown Up All Wrong* is Christgau's love letter to the form that has nourished him and that he has nourished, for 30 years. Typical of American journalism, Christgau's snark in trade is the persona piece, not a puff profile, but an article that simultaneously demystifies and mythologises. What that tends to mean: though it is that Christgau's own persona is often as big as that of his subject (check out the intro that makes out that rock journalism is as world historic as rock itself).

While he is undoubtedly one of the best at untangling the various strands of the pop apparatus, the emphasis on stage has cost him (and most other American rock critics) from embracing any music, too far outside the pop-rock-soul continuum. *Grown Up All Wrong* is misleadingly subtitled "75 Great Rock And Pop Artists From Vaudeville To Techno". The closest thing here to a Techno artist is DJ Shadow, who couldn't be further from Techno if he was Max Bygraves. Centrif to Christgau's criticism is an imagined community of "rock, it's rollers" who have half an ear on developments outside the mainstream, but a deep skepticism of anything too weird. Which might be an accurate picture of the listening habits of most people with more than a passing interest in popular music, but it makes for a convenient excuse to pass off a lot of new music as mere fad and a validation of his (and a lot of Yank journalists') tendency to pick one artist as the representative of an entire genre.

This is less apparent when he takes to his famous *Consumer Guide* — short, sharp album reviews — which produced my all-time favourite one-line record review on *Brownsville Station*: "They weren't smoking in that boys' room — just taking a quick dump." Unfortunately, unless a sentence or two has been intelligently inserted, longer pieces, no such capsule reviews are included here. If this *Consumer Guide* is mostly incomprehensible to anyone but music journalists (not that I or anyone else writing for *The Wire* can talk), his propensity for convolution is exacerbated in long form. With digressions that lend for paragraphs these pieces often feel like they were written to boost the word count.

For all that, though, Christgau rewards careful reading. He can be as savage as he is astute (on Nat King Cole's "The Christmas Song": "It shares with so much great pop especially great black pop the grace of making the bourgeois life seem kind"). And he is one of the few straight mainstream critics to give props to the most underrated pop star of them all, Sylvester. What more could you ask of a music journalist?

PETER SHAFIRO

## NEWSAGENT SHOP SAVE



To make sure that you receive your monthly copy of *The Wire*, simply complete this form and hand it to your local newsagent. You can collect the next issue when you are ready to do so, and you can cancel your order at any time.

**I wish to place a regular order for THE WIRE magazine. Please save a copy for me each month until further notice**

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone

### NEWSAGENT PLEASE NOTE...

**The Wire magazine is available through your usual wholesaler and is fully SOR. In case of difficulty please contact the distributor. Seymour on 0171 396 8000, or the publisher on 0171 439 6422**

# multi media

Louise Gray goes deep in the woods with **Hywel Davies's** *Waldscenen*

Taking grass, radioactive flowers? Composers inspired by natural sounds are nothing new. If Michael Chabon's *Cloudland* over the *Four Seasons* seems too true there's always Messiaen's attempts to discipline barking dogs and birdsong with the rigours of the orchestral score. But nothing in the classical canon quite prepares you for Hywel Davies.

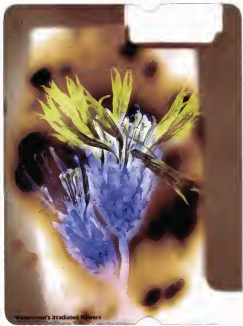
A composer based deep in rural Somerset, Davies has long combined natural sounds with more conventional sound sources. With *Waldscenen* an electroacoustic installation currently showing at the ArtWay Gallery in the New Forest, he's gone one further. The work's sources include taped sound to keyboard music to flora cradled by the falsetto from Chabon. The installation, says Davies, is as much a reading of Schumann's *Opus 82* (the collection of pieces from which the piece gets its title [Waldscenen translates from the German as Forest Scenes]) an exploration of the position that forests occupy in today's age.

Seated about three years ago, Davies's *Waldscenen* was inspired by Schumann's relatively uncomplicated heroic idea of the forest, contrasted with the growing realisation, engendered by his own experience of rural life, of the difference between people's perception of the countryside and its realities. "I hate being dogmatic," says Davies, "but there is an enormous tension about country life. It's not an idyll, especially when the *Flower* rams come down for six weeks at a time. The New Forest is fascinating because so much is happening: it gets 23 million day visitors a year. People move here because of some kind of association, and then there's the fact that communities' ancient rights are being slowly eroded because of demands put on the forest to become a recreation centre."

To address this complexity of issues in art requires an extraordinary approach. Davies's recordings have already revealed a capacity for considerable diversity. He started from a conventional musical background — he studied music at Liverpool and Keele, before moving onto a series of jobs in music publishing and theatre. But with *Natural Language* his 1997 electroacoustic album released on Nottingham's now defunct Emi label, he gave notice of his capacity for tackling the extraordinary. The album contained an invigorating collage of material, both deliberately arranged and aleatoric, which played around with ideas about fairy. Davies also contributed one of the most memorable

passages to Emi's *Undertale* project — an album assembled by the multimedia artist Russell Mills, with whom Davies has often collaborated — in the form of a quartet for cellos. And he also plays in a free improvisation duo with percussionist Martin Pyne.

Accordingly, *Waldscenen* is an attempt to express through sound and image the present-day tensions and dynamics surrounding the forest, while plugging into its oroboreal myth. As Simon Schama's book *Landscape and Memory* recently acknowledged, the forest occupies a powerful presence in the Western myth-making process. As a place of origins, it has a dualistic resonance: it is also a location for death and renewal, of shelter and danger, a place to hunt and be hunted. Davies's work consists of four intertwined galleries, each one defined with its own 'movement' and *leitmotif*. Schumann was his starting point, not just because of *Opus 82*'s title, but because of its associations. Davies says "It may seem odd to use him to describe the English landscape, especially when others — Elgar, Vaughan Williams and Delius, who was a kind of emulous English anyway — have done it before. Schumann led straight into a German tradition of romantic idealism that connects well



Waldscenen's irradiated flowers



with the anxieties and first effects of the industrial revolution."

*Waldscenen* uses texts from Goethe, Joseph von Eichendorff and Hebel to draw out these points, which are reinforced by the sound settings. "The particularly striking human gallery is pitch dark, its sounds tuned to the room's sympathetic overtones. 'You can't replicate it on tape,' Davies says. "It's a kind of



Hywel Davies

environmental effect created by firing the gallery up with the sound wave whose length matches that of the room. Once found, the room acts like a sound box." The room furnishes a frightening experience: deprived of light, your survival instincts come into play. "I have a fantastic book called *The New Musical Education* Published in the 1920s, it has a list of keys and it assigns each key a colour

Scriabin did this more seriously, and this book is fairly cool, quite funny, but it does say that the darkest key is E flat minor. Well, F sharp G flat is the third note of that scale and that's the key that reverberates in set."

"Host avily, direct flowers from an ancient forest near Sierdigrink in Belarus, close to the Ukrainian border and Chornobyl, are used alongside a self-composed piece for cello in a section entitled *Ensemble (Blumen/Venture/Serie) (Solitary Flowers/Remembered Locality)*. The flowers don't exactly tick, although health and safety officers did run the Geger counter over them. There's more radiation on a luminous watch face, but Davies's point — about unbalance and disharmony — stands. The entrance to the first gallery features a severely slowed down Schumann piece for synthesised strings whose unnaturalness is over-emphasised in order to communicate the knock element of forest fantasies. The advertising world, he points out, are quick to market the forest — via Gucci as fashionable and pre-fresh toilet cleaner — as a place where safety, nature and hygiene live in some strange and potent alliance. Hensel and Grew's *Davies* suggests, may remember through a radio channel. *Waldscenen* is at ArtWay, Station Road, Saris, Hampshire until 17 April. Info 01590 682260

## GO TO:



### Caetano Veloso

[www.caetanoveloso.com.br/](http://www.caetanoveloso.com.br/)

This extensive site looks at the long, troubled career of the great Brazilian Tropicalista star. Via a seductive, sophisticated interface that makes the site a joy to navigate, you can rifle through his complete discography, or travel through a biography year by year by clicking the relevant date on a pair of jeans skulls. Veloso's constant capacity for raising the hackles of the Brazilian authorities and public alike are well documented. In 1968 he and Gilberto Gil had their heads shaved in Rio's Marechal Deodoro military headquarters for "un-Brazilian activities," and were then forced to write a song in praise of the Transamazonian highway. Later there were press accusations of pseudo-intellectualism, bomb attacks on his home, and petty corruption scandals in the early 90s. The site includes details of all this plus plenty of pointers to intriguing Tropicalista marginalia.



### V/Search Media

[www.vsearchmedia.com](http://www.vsearchmedia.com)

The infamous Re/Search house of weirdness recently changed hands when co-publisher V Vale set up V/Search Media. With the move has come a new Website. This is the place for you space-age bachelors to mondo-fy your living rooms by picking up eclectic wallpaper CDs such as *Incredibly Strange Music: Vols. 1 & 2*, or *The Essential Perry And Kingsley* with its synth-pop prototypes. If that doesn't appeal to dwellers on the hidden reverse, there's always the solace of a William Burroughs or Modern Primitive T-shirt, or books like *Industrial Culture Handbook*, *Bob Namgong* — *Super Missions*, and of course *The Re/Search Guide To Gaudy Fruits*.

ROB YOUNG



# on location

Going live: festivals, concerts, clubs in the flesh

## Max Roach & Cecil Taylor

UK: London Barbican Centre

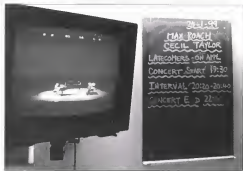
The auditorium at the Barbican Centre was near full for the first UK onstage meeting of Max Roach and Cecil Taylor. It was a straightforward equation: master percussionist plus master pianist plus prestigious venue equals historic occasion. So, it was inspired programming to engage Steve Beresford and Har Berrink for the evening's foyer performance. They were effectively Taylor and Roach through the looking glass — grotesque and, at times, wildly entertaining. Their energetic and amiable buffoonery released welcome laughter into the reverential air.



On the main stage piano to the left faced drum kit on the right, positioned to signify the mutually respectful dialogue to follow. Yet solos formed the opening set. Roach took the stage first. Silver-haired at 75, dressed soberly in black, the man who revolutionised jazz drumming alongside Charlie Parker in the 1940s, and whose consummate artistry has not lapsed since, moved slowly, almost shuffling towards his kit. The warmth of the audience's greeting sprilled that they had come primarily to pay homage: whatever they received in return was a gift. But seated, Roach appeared steady as a rock. Strikingly upright, he began building a solo: starting slowly with a repeating bass pattern, and growing, without apparent effort, towards increasing metrical complexity. The technique is still intact, and, equally importantly, so is the shaping imagination. He was in the driving seat, taking the solo wherever he wanted, and taking the large audience with him. The surprise destination was a simple blues intoned in a wiry, husky voice. It told of sexual gratification, of morn' on down the line, and framed a magically deft solo on 1-4-2-4. Blues at the Barbican? The poignant excursion into the African-American musical past proved the perfect, ironic prelude to Roach's

Cecil Taylor and Max Roach at the Barbican





announcement of Cecil Taylor is a ritual.

Once paid, the great pianist could surely now lay claim to the hyper-appreciative company. But as Roach slowly left the stage, the only indication of Taylor's presence was the sound of a shaman incantation. Then came the voices seeping only into the auditorium through the PA system.

No matter how hard won his current critical and popular acclaim, Taylor, now approaching 70, is still determined to test it to its limits. If the audience is acclimated to his volcanic pyromania, it must be unsettled through other means. His poetry, although/venue by now is still a challenge. But Taylor has refined his idiosyncratic glossolalia with enormous skill and seriousness: in the Barbican, his literally disembodied poetries back receptive listeners to some weird point where Jackson Mac Low's post-Cage experimentation seemed to fuse with Otis Redding's deep soul. Taking the stage, wearing woolly hat and purple pyjamas, Taylor continued to declaim the pulverized language of his fragmented address while gliding and jerking across the stage like a possessed marionette communicating messages from the spirit world. The dance graceful and convoluted by turns seemed destined to go on forever. Whatever might be written about it, there was something irreducibly strange about this performance. And after provoking his followers, he seduced them back with a supremely elegant solo.

Which spirits were speaking through him now? Delusory? Scrubby? Roach's blues seemed suddenly a million miles away. But in the second set these ostensibly disparate worlds collided in the anticipated monumental duet. Taylor led the way. It took his senior partner a while to settle, but they were soon turning off the same circuit, and for 50 minutes the animated exchange, exemplifying all the musical values both men have promoted over many years, captivated the audience. The main course over, Taylor next served up a tenderly lyrical and melodic solo in confirmation of his total affinity. Roach delivered another F-flat solo (this time framed by an anecdote honouring Papa Jo Jones. To

think, a duet in which Taylor ventured as close to funk as he gets) and the drummer matched him all the way to a perfect conclusion. Roach grinned ecstatically and the audience erupted. The culminating embrace may have been predictable, but it was genuinely moving nonetheless. They recognised the reverence in an evening like this: it's a wastage an occasion which must.

JULIAN COWLEY

## John Cale

UK: London (Royal Festival Hall)

Briskly covering the distance from the stage door to the piano with the bravado of a condemned man on his gallows walk — let's get this thing over with — John Cale's would-be macho swagger is reduced to a crippled gait by a squish injury and the clunky red suede shoes that look too small for his feet.

But when he starts reciting Dylan Thomas while huddling his fingers out on the piano keys, his expression is that of a small boy something with anger at always being told he's getting too big for his boots, as he desperately tries to complete the exercise without stumbling over his lines. Playing like a fussy accompanist for a half full of reluctant angels, Cale's keyboard manner and his music's clipped phrases are strangely Methodist and schoolroom aim. Well, as his pretty much null in his autobiography. What's *For Zen?* the boy might take himself out of the valleys, but you can't take the valleys out of the boy.

Whatever its failings for hosting a vessel in rock 'n' roll's mainstream, this early Methodist musical schooling hardened him up for a much more rugged life across the Western frontiers many of his songs patrol with Cale cast as a Robert Mitchum-like preacher, his right hand of low loveliness in a perpetual struggle with the left hand of hate. Further the training gifted him with the ability to make his skeletal piano outlines sound like he's

comping orchestral pieces at an opera rehearsal. That is, they are loud more than full, and what they lose in colour in these pared down and bearded up singers/guitar versions, they certainly don't gain in delicacy of feeling.

Yet the blunted attack of his piano playing, which only lets up when he switches to semi-amplified acoustic guitar, invariably focuses his songs' plaintive, sometimes pretty qualities. As on the 1992 live CD, *Promises Of A Rainy Season*, whose career spanning programme Cale closely follows tonight, his brute piano pummeling takes some getting used to. But once your ears are accustomed to being bled, you notice how his two excellent sidemen, Lance Doss and Mark DeFendolph, who between them provide laptop steel, bongos, guitar, harmonica, flute, jaw's harp and backing vocals, shade in the subtleties. Cale's seen-off playing means. Like witty film composers, they do not necessarily accept their leader's self-image as the William Holden of underground rock prosing for a final showdown, and go about slyly undermining it with the playful instrumental touches that incidentally round out his character.

Finally, however, the *Waltz* cowboy's brained terror must do the serious man's gait-to-shuffle. His surprisingly vulnerable voice is the emotional face coming through the screenplay's dispersed scenes and scattered images — some songs are little more than barely sketched scenes. Knotted into a string of evocative place names — galvanizing them into the compelling narratives that keep you hanging on until long after the last chord has died.

BILL RUFF

John Cale at the Festival Hall



## Festival Arts/Sciences 1999: Roland Auzet & DJ Spooky

France: Paris (Cité Des Sciences Et De L'Industrie)

In Paris, Atelier L'Upic, the music studio founded by Denis Neukirch, has been attempting to open up contemporary music to new audiences for some years now. Past successes include performances of Hono, Yannis and Cibo-Trip in the futuristic setting of an IMAX cinema, while Es Stockhausen series presented in a planetarium last year was enthusiastically received by a mixed crowd spanning classical, electroacoustic and electronica fans.

This year it invited DJ Spooky to take part in the first edition of its Festival Arts/Sciences. Pairing him with contemporary percussionist and composer Roland Auzet was the perfect opportunity to confront the very different attitudes adopted by Techno and the academics, respectively, to scientific discourses in sound.

Auzet opened the evening with a series of solo performances. These included an extract from Nicola Galimberti's *Le Vi De Caré* — an homage to Bruce Chatwin's book *The Songlines* — the sound of dripping water resounded through the hall, while Auzet caressed the surface of his drums with a brush, a stick or the palm of his hand. It was augmented by a tape section partly created on Yasuaki's L'Upic system (a compositional tool that uses drawings or sketches rather than conventional musical notation). The unearthly atmosphere it engendered blended perfectly with Auzet's



Ned Rotherberg. Below: Details from Paul Panhuyzen's XI Installation

soft, undistorted percussion sounds. Auzet's virtuosic performance of Xenakis's *Phosphor* using MAX/MSP software to transform his percussion sounds in real-time breathed new life into the piece. Not that it did him much good—the audience, swollen by a legion of impatient Spooky fans, wasn't paying attention.

This wasn't Spooky's first experience of the contemporary music world—he once collaborated with the New York Xenakis specialists, the ST-X Ensemble, to mixed reviews. In Paris, the Subliminal Kid's last-back performance was no match for Auzet's greatest performance playing. Their first peek was based on a broad outline they had worked out beforehand. Called *Synchrona Version 2.0*, it was constructed from sounds especially mined for the occasion by Spooky at his own lab in New York and at Ubu's studio, with extra contributions from Auzet. Spooky's dense mix of percussive textures may well have been atmospheric, but his performance was aimless and unconvincing. His high point was Auzet's polished, all too brief performance on the zils.

The second collaboration was similarly unconvincing: despite Spooky's occasionally inspired manipulations on his amplified trumpet pair. As the evening wore on, the two performers injected a little more urgency into the music, but Auzet's tense, climactic drumming stole the show. Spooky might be a talented writer, DJ and recording artist, but live he just wasn't in his element. If Auzet/Ubu is as much laboratory as performance space, the conclusion from tonight's experiment must be that touching up modern composition with the trappings of techno is a risky business.

RANJIA KHAJARI

## XI Foundation 30th Anniversary Festival USA, New York, B34 Centre Street

For 25 years the Experimental Intermedia Foundation (XI) has been based in a beautiful pre-war loft in New York's Chinatown, which is also home to its director, the composer/ filmmaker Phil Nitsch. A New Music embassy of sorts, the foundation houses an archive of reel-to-reel tapes whose spines read like a dictionary of experimental music. And since it resided in the building's tranquil surroundings have been invaded annually by hundreds of the world's most avant-garde sound artists, composers and noise transgressors.

Possibly the most anticipated of the eight artists performed for this year's celebratory XI festival, which marked the Foundation's 30th birthday, was a rare performance by Dutch sound sculptor Paul Panhuyzen, who adapts his long string installations and inverted instruments to the specifics of a performance site. Once his simple mechanical automations start the strings resonating, they give anyone in the room a sense of what it must be like inside the soundshell of a violin, piano or cello. Here in the Chinatown loft, Panhuyzen jury-rigged a series of tuba piano wires between two pillars, from which he hung squares of red mimicking the lanterns strung along Chinatown's stoeps. The attached scale rods traced the wires into performing mechanical staccato rhythms. Casually controlling the moving board, Panhuyzen augmented them with laptop'd arpeggios, out of sympathy with the serra and traffic noises of the street below. The piece flouted a reading from French philosopher Jacques Derrida's *The*

*Technological Condition*, whose enchanting narrative counterpointed the tactile vibrations of Panhuyzen's sound generating sculptures. Their humming and clattering amounted to a symphony of arbitrary noise not unlike the daytime buzz rising from the garment factory next door.

US artist Don Senn's *Brown Piano* was also about suspended strings. But his constructions owed more to precision physics than Panhuyzen's Renaissance engineering. Subsonic audio agitated his high tension wires causing suspended bells to pivot and collide repeatedly. This kind of thing was more an art installation than concert event, but Senn seized his platform to deliver a lecture on the concepts behind his work, invoking John Cage and Harry Partch to back up his case. Once he'd raised memories of such figures, his lecture combined with his installation in a comparative essay on the present moment.

Woodwind player Ned Rotherberg's solo performance was founded on his circular breathing technique. The cyclical flow of air allowed him to exploit the full range of his bass clarinet's timbral possibilities, while he coaxed the instrument's keys by way of percussion. Such a performance required the respiratory capacity of a pearl diver. His

unpredictable piece featuring a text narrated by a highly imitating Mac software generated voice over disconcerting dialogues between trombone, violin and electronics. Composed from acoustic and computer generated tones, with each component intent on canceling the other out, this wasn't so much hybrid music as a verbal gesture. Behman displays a similar infatuation with suspended time as Horton Feldman. His work courageously challenges its own parameters. If he left some of his audience scratching their heads, it was a relief to find an acclaimed electroacoustic composer more intent on moving forward than constantly returning to the scene of his greatest triumphs.

If the XI Foundation is guilty of anything, it is staying loyal to the composers it started out with during its first 15 years. In Lukas Ligeti, however, it is beginning to nurture a second generation of artists. An electronic percussionist working banks of samplers, Ligeti has an incredible sense for polyrhythms. He constructs laments of parallel pulses in African inspired patterns over Xenakis-like string glances. For his solo pieces, he has used gestures that could have come from latter György Ligeti's compositions. Transcribed in the dim light of the doorway of a Cologne electronic club, He also played by Rotherberg and improvising violinist Mark Kamura for a sequence of freedom pieces.

XI's resident host Phil Nitsch had subtitled this event, *The Ninth Annual Festival With No Fancy Name*, by way of asserting the pragmatism that characterizes his music and aims. The space was totally transformed for the closing event, Nitsch's by now infamous annual six-hour solstice. The shored day of the year was consumed by his *Phantom* power drums and screenings of his many documentaries. His films come on Third World audio scenes, shot in real-time single takes. Adapted with his constant drones they evoke a paradoxical enmeshment of anxiety and sedation. Audaciously Nitsch's music shares territory with Tony Conrad, Rhyx Chatham and Glenn Branca. Not only do they have multiple electric guitar pieces in common, they'd be more at home onstage with Maczbow than in a New Music conservatory.

Nitsch's solstice was mostly broadcast from tapes interspersed with a few live performances. A piece for seven guitars sharing two notes was led by Band Of Susans. Robert Postas a member of Post's guitar posse on the night. I should here declare an interest: A Nitsch string quartet was performed by David Solov and a cellist accompanying their top selves. But these relatively brief live interludes were enveloped by the persistent tone that rang well into the night. Its resonances have been ringing out over the Manhattan rooftops for 30 years already. Long may the drone continue.

DEAN ROBERTS



multitronic immersions were twice-rewarded with a few sonic pairings, especially when he was joined by David Werstein, who loaned Rotherberg's horn into quadruphonic electroacoustic territory. Like Evan Parker, Rotherberg's predilection for live electronic processing permits him to retain real-time spontaneity within a computer enhanced environment. Such a marriage of electronics and acoustics was rapidly becoming the XI Festival's underlying thread.

New York composer David Behman surprised an eager audience with an

# at a glance

## DYNAMIX

Barber • Broadway  
Forbman • Lane  
Horne • Nunn  
Watt

St Anns, 449 Wilbraham  
Road, Manchester  
M87J 0J 812

## TANGO!

Palevella  
QEH, London SE1  
0171 960 4242

## PSAPHA

Penderecki  
Berkeley • Pratt  
Tanaka • Wilson  
Hope on the Witterland,  
Albert Dock, Liverpool

## FIRE OF MARLBORNE

Oliver • Eriksson  
Marshall, Davies  
Schonberg  
Duke • Hall, RAME  
Marylebone Road, London  
NW1 • 0171 873 7300

## IGOR'S BOOGIE

Zappa • Weirlich  
Reinhardt • Ales  
Griffin  
Beaumont Ave  
01256 844 244

## MORLEY WIND

de Haan • Dodgson  
Carr  
BMC, 10 Stratford  
Place, London W1  
0171 499 8567

## NEW MUSIC GROUP

Harvey  
York • 01904 422439

## EDGE OF A DREAM

Lutskowski • Takemitsu  
Adams  
RPH, South Bank  
Centre, London SE1  
0171 960 4242

## MUSIC PAST & PRESENT

Britten • Berkeley  
Williams • Matthews  
Jacksons Lane Theatre  
208a Archway Road,  
London N6 • 0171 341 4421

## LONDON SINFONETTA

Baksh • Harvey  
QEH, London SE1  
0171 960 4242

## CONTEMPORARY

Consort  
Custas • Watkins  
Lambert • Anderson  
RCH, Prince Consort  
Road, London SW7  
0171 591 4304

## PARAGON ENSEMBLE

SCOTLAND  
Daugherty • Adams  
Queen's Hall, Edinburgh  
0131 667 7776

## THE NASH ENSEMBLE

Birtwistle • Debussy  
Stravinsky  
Purcell Room, London SE1  
0171 960 4242

## THE BURGUNDIAN

CADENCE  
Hugill  
BMC, 10 Stratford Place,  
London W1  
0171 274 3566

## HOCKER BRITAIN

Marshall • Pindley  
Barnett • Carle  
Horne • Emile  
Grissy • Crane  
The Wirehouse, 10 Thread  
Street, London SE1  
0171 538 2947

## THE BURGUNDIAN

CADENCE  
Hugill • Dunscombe  
Cook • Power  
Cawley  
St Mary Abbots Church,  
Kensington High Street,  
London W9  
0171 274 3566

## TOWARDS THE

MILLENNIUM  
New  
Symphony Hall, Broad  
Street, Birmingham B3  
0121 332 3333

## TOWARDS THE

MILLENNIUM  
Lutskowski  
Takemitsu • Adams  
Symphony Hall, Broad  
Street, Birmingham B3  
0121 332 3333

## ORCHESTRA OF ST

JOHN'S 5TH SQUARE  
Montague  
Oxford Town Hall  
01865 796610

## STONELEIGH YO

Harwitz • Fint  
Vaughan Williams  
Secker  
Epsom Playhouse, Epsom,  
Surrey • 01752 742333

## NTU COMPOSERS

ENSEMBLE  
Kestler • Hanson  
Daigado • Ghezzi  
Mancini • Kraft  
Scarlatti • Calabrese  
Durkovic • Sals Lea  
Hogart-Tarrant • Kluska  
St Giles Cripplegate  
Barbican, London EC2

## TOWARDS THE

MILLENNIUM  
RPH, London SE1  
0171 960 4242

## LONDON

CONCERT CHOIR  
Spears • Brans  
GDL, London SE1  
0171 580 4242

## ENDYMION ENSEMBLE

Bassani • Feldman • Ivas  
Harrison • Bryans  
Cawley  
Purcell Room, London SE1  
0171 960 4242

## PSAPHA

Ligeti • Musgrave  
Gerhardt  
Albert Dock, Liverpool

## TOWARDS THE

MILLENNIUM  
Kurtzig • Gubaydulina  
Birtwistle  
Symphony Hall,  
Birmingham • 0121 332 3333

## WHERE THE WILD

THINGS ARE  
Knussen  
QEH, London SE1  
0171 960 4242

## A NEW LOOK FOR

NEW MUSIC  
Smith • Heesbeen  
Harvey • Austin • Ivas  
Montague  
Avoncroft Museum of  
Buildings, Stonegrave  
01527 874637

## RCM SO

Debussy • Payne  
Vares • Ruggles  
RCM, Prince Consort  
Road, London SW7  
0171 591 4304

## NASH ENSEMBLE

Widkins • Turgine  
Matthews • Anderson  
Harvey  
Purcell Room, London SE1  
0171 960 4242

## MUSIC OF PRESNER

Presner  
Royal Festival Hall,  
London SE1  
0171 960 4242

## LONDON MOZART

PLAYERS  
Britten • Martin  
Bloch • Tippett  
St John's, Smith Square,  
London SW1  
0171 222 0561

## WILD THINGS

EXPERIENCE  
Knussen  
Royal Festival Hall,  
London SE1  
0171 960 4242

## SOUND WAVES

Mozart • MacMillan  
Walton  
Sally Benney Theatre,  
28 St Archway Road,  
London N6 • 0171 341 4421

## THE PIELHARMONIA

Daugherty  
De Montford Hall,  
Leicester • 01533 889 95M

## MUSIC PAST & PRESENT

Bach • Wesley  
Broadbent • Mendelssohn  
Furstenau  
Jacksons Lane Theatre,  
208a Archway Road,  
London N6 • 0171 341 4421

## PIELHARMONIA

ORCHESTRA  
Daugherty  
Royal Festival Hall,  
London SE1  
0171 960 4242

## HARLEQUIN

Mathias • Kest • Alvarez  
Deighton • Berkeley  
BMC, 10 Stratford Place,  
London W1  
0171 499 8567

## NASH ENSEMBLE

Tippett  
Purcell Room, London SE1  
0171 960 4242

## NEW MUSIC PLAYERS

Bartok • Holst  
Hobson • Hughes  
Crawford Seeger  
37a Canterbury Square,  
London NE1  
0171 704 9323

## NORTHERN SINFONIA

Caden • Lilly • Ravel  
Faure • Rameau  
Newcastle City Hall,  
Northumberland Road,  
Newcastle NE1 8ST  
01503 591 996

## MANCHESTER SCHOOL

Berg • Gersh  
Harrison • Debussy  
BMC, 10 Stratford Place,  
London W1  
0171 499 8567

## CONGA LINE IN HELL

Barber • Alvarrez  
del Aguila • Gershwin  
Piazzolla • Thorpe  
Grovehouse • Ivas  
Purcell Room, London SE1  
0171 960 4242

## ENSEMBLE 10.10

Chaves • Schweitzer  
Albert • Riddle • Lesh  
Philharmonia Hall, Hope  
Street, Liverpool L1  
0151 709 3789

## EDGE OF A DREAM

Royal Festival Hall,  
London SE1  
0171 960 4242

## LONDON

INTERNATIONAL BRASS  
FESTIVAL  
Birtwistle • Powell  
McGarr • Vinter  
Duke • Hall, RAME  
Marylebone Road, London  
NW1 • 0171 224 6090

## FARNHAM FESTIVAL

Arnold • Hughes • Reed  
Shostakovich  
Great Hall, Farnham  
Castle  
01252 726234

## NICOLAS HODGES

Scarlatti • Debussy  
Clarke • Liszt  
Purcell Room, London SE1  
0171 960 4242

## MANCHESTER SCHOOL

Peter Maxwell Davies •  
Schonberg • Britten  
BMC, 10 Stratford Place,  
London W1 • 0171 499 8567

## KEY:

world premiere  
UK premiere  
London premiere

march 99

This is a summary of events listed in new notes, spnm's essential guide to what's happening in new music.

Join us!

Tel. 0171 828 9696 • Fax 0171 931 9928

www.spnm.org.uk



## Poie



## Current

Dining Night of The Wire's new regular space for experimental, electronic-splashed music and vinyl-based music on vinyl, hosted each month by DJs from the Wire Sound System. Rhys Chatham presents his forthcoming album, *Hard Edge*, which will be released in April on The Wire's rebranded Wire Editions label in a trio with guitarist Gary Smith and keyboardist/sampler Pat Thomas, and there'll be an extended DJ set from Berlin's Poie. London: Crossbar, 24 March, 8pm-1am, £5/4, 0171 837 6900

lounge beats. Glasgow: White Lounge at Alaska, Sundays 11pm-3am, £3/2

**Inside Looking Out** Interspacing Incorporated present a night of live beats and breaks, with Dynamic Synchpoint shadow screen broadcasting, and a turntable-driven main-up featuring Harry Love from The Scratch Revolvers. London: ICA, 27 March 8pm-1am, £B/ET 0171 930 3647

**Kosmische** 'Kosmos' brings the north-drum-rock to the Kraut-inspired club, plus out pop from A Perfect Vacuum and DJs Arthur Pound and Tom Total. London: Upstairs at the Garage, 27 March, 9pm-3am, £5/4 0171 385 6171

**Little Stabs At Happiness** Mark Webber's monthly music and movie mix. This month he'll be screening the 70s erotic pagan masterpiece, *The Wicker Man*, as well as a handful of obscure American art flicks, and DJing with friends in the bar. London: ICA, 13 March 8pm-1am, £B/ET 0171 930 3647

**Lovebytes & Semi-Ents** Live electronic from Raddoby, Squaresourher and The Veligut Brothers, plus DJing by Autchre, Herbert, Russell Haswell, Jean Shurt and more. Sheffield: Live Nightsclub, 14 March, 8pm-midnight, £114 278 4540

**Open** Electronic, post-rock, Electro and beyond. This month's live guests are German female dominatrices Walküren, along with regular DJs Tom Total, Jim Backhouse and Leon Kosmische. London: George IV, 26 March 9pm-2am, £5, 0171 385 6171

**Rhizome 5** Soundtracks, imagery and real as in their own right: premiering film/music collaborations involving Torosé Spook, Clifford Gilberto and Franticore. Cork: Trakal Arts Centre, 20 March, 11pm, £5/4, 00 353 21 272022

**Sitarhouse** New Asian Underground package featuring Earthrise, Naladi Kumar, Djs Diamond Fager, Nelson Diamond and more. Newcastle Riverside (4 March), Manchester Band On The Wall (5), Bristol: Easton Contemporary Centre (6), Luton: Arnebrook (13), London: Shepherd's Bush Empire (20). **Shine Sabbath** DJ Disastronix reads the latest digital noise mayhem on the Sunset coast. This month: live music from We Are Like Machines We Consume and Skullfuck 114).

Half playing live and whacked out DJing from Kristen (Project DARIO) and Janek Scheeler (28): Brighton Arts Club Ballrooms. fortnightly Sundays 6-11pm, £1 01273 727371

**Sonic Moeb Experiment** Sneaking after dark to a decade of the Scala, the former North London cinema, has been affiliated with the indie scene. On the launch night, Earl Bruford, James Lovell, I. Sall Kane, Mark Kane, Kris Needs, Desolation, The Nihilist and more (20 March). The following week, artists include Dan Moss, Will White (Propellerheads) Headcleaner, Eddie Scratch and DC, Blind City, Janek Scheeler and others. London: Scala, weekly Saturdays, 0171 833 2022

**The Spawell** Back after a month's break, the Net-friendly techno club presents a Soymore label night (4 March), Spongeboy & Tench versus Benge and Solar X (11), DJ set from Kodo Ebor (18), and Dunderhead (25). London: Global Cafe, Thursdays 7-10pm-midnight, £3/2, 0181 568 3145

**Static** Osymyo plays live plunderphons in the metallic ambience of this Soho cafe. London: Bar Tactical, 22 March, 7-11pm, free, info 01273 775941

**Subversion** Regular weekly mixes of contemporary, classical, Ambient, downtempo tunes from DJs Richard Lumsy and Jan Soddarland. London: Borkat, Saturdays, 8pm-1am, free, 0171 631 0362

**Technique** Metalhead-style drum 'n' bass, with this month's guests Phobias, Ratty, Harits label showcase (11 March), DJ De, Simon Baseline (18), New Tonic (25). Derby: Loft, fortnightly Thursdays, 01332 381169

**Toothed** Latest electronic jam session organised by 800's Staters Graham Massey. Special guests this month are Mark Herbert aka Raddoby, Patrick Pulsinger in a rare visit from Vienna, and Matt Thompson (Galaxy 102). Manchester: Band On The Wall, 17 March, 9pm-2am, £5, 0161 833 0682

**Wierdo** Huterleides weekly underground music cabal - led by Djs Mike Jagger and Spark - really spell their club name like that. This month, Protobrothers Andy Smith, Mark Franklin from Kava Kava, and live group The Bluebon Project, guested at its expanded one-off (13 March). Huddersfield: Alhambra, Saturdays, 10pm-2am, £4, 01484 542967

## Radio

## National

## BBC Radio 1 97-99 PM

**John Peel** Tuesdays-Thursdays 8-10-10:30pm The best place to keep up with new rock indie, Techno, Jungle, Electronic, dub and the legendary sessions

**Gilles Peterson** Wednesdays midnight-2am Up-and-downtown beats, experimental drum 'n' bass, funk, psychedelic soul, and plenty more in between

**Andy Kershaw** Thursdays midnight-2am RnB music and global sounds, including folk, roots, reggae, out rock and more

**Fabrizio Groverier** Fridays 2-4am Two hours of fast-breaking drum 'n' bass

**Westwood Rap Show** Fridays 7pm-2am Saturdays 5pm-midnight Tim's fast breaking HipHop tips

**Azzie Nightingale** Sundays 4-6:30pm Chilled, eclectic sounds for après clubbers, early risers and/or insomnia

## BBC Radio 3 90-93 PM

**Phising** Mondays 10-11/11:30pm Eclectic mix of music and discourse from Robert Sandall and Mark Russell. This month: Jocelyn Pook in session (8 March), film music special (22)

**Jazz On 3** Saturdays 7-11:30pm 1am Modern jazz recorded in concert. This month: Cassandra Wilson (5 March), Jim Whitehead (13), Geoff Keezer (20), Max Roach & Cecil Taylor (27)

**World Music** Sundays 17-15-17:45pm Ethnec explorations via field recordings. This month: Ritmo Music of Latin America to 28 March

**Jazz Century: 1959-Hillman** Saturdays 6pm Weekly survey of jazz history. This month's episodes: *Count On* (6 March), *The Last Time* (13), *Louis Armstrong* (13), *Towards Lyncom* (20), *Handful Of Keys* (27)

## Regional

## BBC Derby 04.7/95.3/104.5 FM, 1116 MW

**Soundscapes** Sundays 3-5pm Ashley Hankins plays instrumental Electronic contemporary/classical/systems music, New Age and Ambient

## BBC Greater London Radio (GLR) 94.9 FM

**Destination In** Wednesdays 9-10:30pm Ross Avelar spins a motley, morphing selection of new music, from space jazz to Minimalism to electronic and leftfield pop

**Charlie Gillett** Saturdays 7-9pm Rock, roots, dub, World Music, blues, R&B and more sounds of the city

## BBC Lancashire 95.5/103.8/104.5 FM, 885 MW

**On The Wire** Saturdays 1-3pm Steve Barker's mid-New Music mix: dub, experimental electronics, old rock, free improv and more

## BBC Newcastle 96.6 FM, 1485 MW

**The Late World Noise** Sundays 10pm-11pm Out rock, psychedelia, Jungle, avant garde, warped Ambient and global gems in themed sequences

## BBC Scotland 93.4-94.1 FM

**From Deep To HipHop** Wednesdays 8-9pm David Sellers drops jazz and new beats

**Beat Patrol** Sundays 8-9pm Peter Aston plays independent music across the spectrum

**Electronica** Sundays 9-10pm Mark Percival airs the latest Techno and dance tracks

## Cable Radio 99.8 FM (Million Keynote)

**The Garden Of Earthly Delights** Fridays 10pm-midnight Shane Quentron's blend of avant rock to electronic, exotica, with bizarre soundbites

## Galaxy 102 FM (Manchester)

**Matt Thompson** Fridays 10pm-11:30pm The perfect prescription for alternative music in the North West: drum 'n' bass, intelligent Techno, HipHop, post-rock and more

## Kiss 100 FM (London)

**Ravalli** Wednesdays 10pm-midnight New drum 'n' bass

**Givir It Up** Wednesdays midnight-3am Weekly guest mixes

**Coin Dale** Thursdays 10pm-midnight Minimal Techno and concrete House

**Front and Hype** Fridays midnight-2am Home breakfast that's only the most

**Steel Steel** Sundays 1-3pm Coldcut, DJ Food and regular guests dig through the crates for some Ninja-style turntablist mayhem

**The Cold Out Zone** Sundays 8-9pm Paul Thomas's experimental Electronic mix

**Patrick Force** Sundays 8-10pm Eclectic jazz-rock-jazz mix

**4 Hero** Sundays 10pm-midnight Jazz, Jungle, cyber-soul, breakbeats, electrified grooves from the Reinforced duo and guests

## PIANO CIRCUS

Pianists with varied musical interests wanted for unique contemporary music group working internationally  
Performing and ensemble experience essential  
Knowledge of music technology an advantage

Auditions March 15.

CV to: Kate Heath, 20 Mentmore Terrace, London, E8 3PW

[www.pianocircus.demon.co.uk](http://www.pianocircus.demon.co.uk)

## THE CROTCHET WEB STORE

- 10 Departments dedicated to Classical Music, Jazz & Film Soundtracks
- Browse the new releases
- Search our on-line database
- Order securely

[www.crochet.co.uk](http://www.crochet.co.uk)



**Harry Patch: Echoes of War**  
Five 3-CD set of Great War-related dramas  
(Enriched, Revisited, King Oedipus) -- part of award-winning box/series (#1409)

**Steve Crockett KC:**  
International Festival of Electroacoustic Music  
Montage, Robots, Birds, Rhythmic, Lullabies, Rascals, Barnes (#1115)

**Matthew Burtner:** Portals of Deception: Music for Symphonic Computers, and Steampunk Global  
Insights from a new Alaskan drone master (#526)

[www.composersforum.org](http://www.composersforum.org) [info@composersforum.org](mailto:info@composersforum.org)  
American Composers Forum  
332 Minnesota St. E-145, St. Paul, MN 55101, USA

## LABRADFORD

### SECOND LONDON FESTIVAL OF DRIFTING

MAY 26-30  
UNION CHAPEL, ISLINGTON

new album "E LUXO SO"  
out 17th may

FOUNDATION & BLAST FIRST  
tix: [www.ticketweb.co.uk](http://www.ticketweb.co.uk)



unofficial technology, unofficial of record/master

**MAIL ORDER HOTLINE: 0161 834 8789**

**JOIN OUR FREE MAILING LIST**

**EXCLUSIVE DETAILS OF NEW RELEASES/LTD EDITIONS / RARITIES & UP COMING EVENTS**

**SEND US YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS ALONG WITH DETAILS OF WHICH LISTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN:**

**PROG AND KRAUT / CANTERBURY SCENE / ELECTRONICA & EXPERIMENTAL / INDIE, LEFTFIELD & PUNK / HOUSE & TECHNO/HIP-HOP, FUNK, TRIP HOP ETC.**

Our email address: [mailorder@piccadillyrecords.co.uk](mailto:mailorder@piccadillyrecords.co.uk)

excerpts on a Wobly (K)

**Job Bishop** 88 Duets  
(Don Handel, David Byrne, Madonna, Prince, Madonna, Prince, Madonna, Prince)

**Susie Thara / Denis Charles**  
Drum Talk

**Steve Lacy**  
Solo: Live at Unity Temple

**Mats Gustafsson's AALY Trio**  
+ Ken Vandermark  
Scumble

**Wadada Leo Smith & Harumi Makino Smith**  
Conder, Autumn Wind

coming soon: **John Butcher / Phil Durrant** cd

cd cda \$36US gsd. Government, 813 ppd on 150 of sub zero boot record store

**Wobly Red**  
PO Box 18088  
Chicago, IL 60618  
USA  
http://woblyrecords.com  
mail: woblyrecords@woblyrecords.com

**Wobly Red**  
PO Box 18088  
Chicago, IL 60618  
USA  
http://woblyrecords.com  
mail: woblyrecords@woblyrecords.com



**NEW RELEASE!**  
Each \$120 (incl. Post & P&H)

**FROM DINGERLAND**

**CTCD-160**  
1-A DUSSELDORF  
/FETTLER

**CTCD-161**  
ALPHEIST DUSSELDORF  
IN NEW YORK

We have FREE CATALOGUE for Mail-order.  
PLEASE CONTACT TO US!

**CAPTAIN TRIP RECORDS**  
3-17-14 Nishimi-Kolwa, Edogawa-Ku  
TOKYO, JAPAN  
FAX 81-3-3659-6169

## MIDHEAVEN MAILORDER

Swans Various Futures 2xCD R118\$!!!  
Metallic Sensory: CD  
Sunroof Delicate  
Autobahn Under  
Construction 2xCD  
Bodyhaters  
3x13 CD

**CANTING JAZZ**  
CD releases by Metabelismus & Village of Savoengia  
new CDs by Hash Jar Tempo, Atzman, Biuguculi,  
Alan Licht, STR4 (F10), E.A.R./Jessamine live CD  
and more...  
all the best releases of 2003

call 01183-241111 email [info@midheaven.com](mailto:info@midheaven.com) [www.midheaven.com](http://www.midheaven.com)  
fax +415-241-2421 Visa and MasterCard! New bands!

We'll mail you a catalog or save a copy yourself at [www.midheaven.com/](http://www.midheaven.com/)  
c/o Revolver USA, 2515 16th St., 3rd Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103 USA

## SPECIAL OFFER

### Lindsay Cooper

### A View From The Bridge

Double CD  
£14 inc. p&p

ReR/Recommended, Dept W  
79 Beulah Road, Thornham Heath,  
Surrey CR7 8JG  
Credit card hotline: 0181 771 1063  
email: [megacorp@dial.pipex.com](mailto:megacorp@dial.pipex.com)

**FULLY ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE 61**

## HALCYON MUSIC • FETISH RECORDS



**ELETRIK MUSIK MAIL ORDER**

ORDERS • FREE MONTHLY UPDATE  
01395 572489 (24hrs)

NEW RELEASES ON HALCYON MUSIC.  
JERRY HATCHING 1-3-£13.99 EACH  
GOS OF THE WINDY FUTURE SOUND OF EXETER £7.99

UNIT 1, 14 GUSSEFORD LANE EXMOUTH, EX8 2SF

ALL FREE P&P IN THE UK



© 2006 Blackwell Publishing Ltd  
Journal compilation © 2006 Blackwell Publishing Ltd



# subscribe

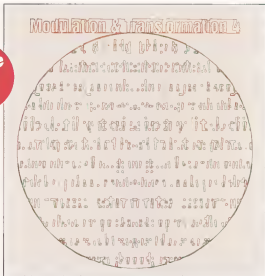
## Free CDs! Free magazines!

Our March offer: take out your first subscription to *The Wire* and get a **Mille Plateaux CD** or **three extra issues** — FREE!

### Modulation & Transformation 4

Mille Plateaux's fourth report on the health of the global electronic network is a mammoth three CD set which samples from the label's powerful roster of international electronica. Many of the 36 tracks are exclusive to the compilation, and cover the globe, with artists from the UK, Europe, America and Japan. Musicians include Terre Thaemlitz, Mouse On Mars, Lithops, Thomas Brinkmann, Gas, Rehberg & Bauer, Thomas Köner, Noto, Fania, Kerosene, Techno Animal, DJ Spooky, Pluramon, Ryoji Ikeda, Achim Wollschlae, Ultra-Red, Scanner, Dean Roberts, Curd Ducc, Christophe Charles and more. Get a copy FREE when you take out your first subscription to *The Wire*.

**Triple  
CD**



**Or  
3 Free  
Issues**

### Three Extra Issues

As an alternative to our free CD offer, take out your first subscription to *The Wire* today and get **three extra copies** of the magazine absolutely FREE. That means your first yearly subscription will run for 15 issues instead of the usual 12, making a saving of over 30 per cent on the shop price.

**SUBSCRIBER BENEFITS:** 12 ISSUES PER YEAR BY DIRECT MAIL, DELIVERY SCHEDULE UK: 14 DAYS (EUROPE/USA: 12 WEEKS) SURFACE: 4-12 WEEKS. A FREE INTRODUCTORY CD OR 3 FREE ISSUES FOR ALL NEW SUBSCRIBERS INCLUDING OVERSEAS. OVERSEAS SUBSCRIBERS RECEIVE ANY COVER INCENTIVE CODE NOT AVAILABLE ON OVERSEAS NEWSSTANDS. DISCOUNTS ON BACK ISSUES CHECKS AND WIRE MERCHANDISE.

ORDER FORM

UK £30 • EUROPE (A) £38 • USA \$40/£38 • REST OF WORLD £48/£30 • Surface £38

How you wish your subscription to start with \_\_\_\_\_ (month)

Please send my ☐ **Modulation & Transformation 4 CD** OR

☐ **3 extra issues (ask ONE box) & subscription to:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_ Tel \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Return this page (or a copy) to: **The Wire Magazine, FREEPOST, 48-48 Poland St, London W1E 3EL, Fax: +44 (0)171 287 4767, E-mail: the\_wire@ukonline.co.uk**

*1st The free CD is a limited offer and will be sent separately after the other discs. subscribe now to avoid disappointment!*

No stamp needed if mailed within the UK. Payment by UK sterling cheque, international money order, Eurocheque or US dollar cheque.

☐ I enclose my cheque/money order made payable to WIRE for £ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please charge £ \_\_\_\_\_ to my:

Mastercard ☐ Amex ☐ Visa/Delta ☐ Switch ☐

Card No \_\_\_\_\_

(for Switch cards please supply the longest ie 16 or 19 digit number)

Expiry date \_\_\_\_\_ Switch Card Issue No \_\_\_\_\_

(please supply cardholder's name and address if different from opposite)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

☐ please tick here if you would prefer not to receive occasional mailings from compatible organisations

### SUBSCRIPTION HOTLINES

Tel +44 (0)171 734 3555 • Fax +44 (0)171 287 4767

Subscribe via the Web: [www.dfuse.com/the-wire](http://www.dfuse.com/the-wire)

# THE WIRE

# epiphanies

Ed Baxter experiences the "Four O'Clock Blues" according to Skip James

The room is pretty much bare, just a chair, some rudimentary equipment. From the window you can see the church clock down the road. The town sprawls out every which way, lapsing into incoherence where the railway abandons it by the side of the shanty-lined road. The place is Grafton, Wisconsin and it is February 1931. The man who climbs the stairs and takes the chair is Nehemiah "Skip" James, who has come there to play music. He's there a few days perhaps, sleeping in a cheap room on the other side of town. He has signed to lay down some race records for Mr MC Spier. The two men meet twice and James, who has been to divinity school, signs his name on Spier's contract at their second and final meeting. He's 28 years old, a loner whose God is neither jealous nor vengeful, but rather a little odd. His music is uncanny, a dramatic and audibly weird combination of guitar licks executed with lightning speed and a ghostly voice that comes directly from another world. There's humour in the voice, just, but its tone is more palpably alarming. A high, keening voice

that makes the fields, the church, the forest and the railroad yard its own. Transcendent is a term that history will apply to this music when half a lifetime later it is picked up by rock groups hungry to mine its meanings. Some of Skip's songs become classics long after they have been forgotten by the audience they were made for. His lyrics strike a note of batty euphoria that impresses itself on the teenage brain. "I'm so glad I am glad, I am glad I'm glad, I don't know what to do, don't know what to do, don't know what to do." His inimitable, fluid guitar playing is imitated by the great and the good and towards the end of his life he even makes some money from it. He's located in a hospital bed, brought to a few folk festivals in his final years. But the sporting, happy accident that brings the spotlight, spinning crazily over him in old age is as nothing compared to that which is given voice in the wintry room in Grafton.

18 songs survive, five with Skip playing piano, for the rest he's on guitar. His sounds like he's enjoying himself. But his voice carries such contradictory messages. At times he's in agony, screaming in pain. Haystack never seems too far away, he's energised, now wacky, then scarily dark. His songs are waiting for electricity, they bide their time in a state of restlessness. Their violence is of the broody sort. No music, perhaps, sits so strangely with its form. By virtue of their rarity Skip's surviving recordings are all badly scratched acetates. One in particular, "Four O'Clock Blues", comprises 50 per cent Skip, 50 per cent surface noise. When I first heard it, I laughed that anyone should bother to re-release it. Closer listening, and a growing conviction that if you assume that what an artist does is — or necessarily appears to be — conscious, led me to come back again and again to this song. Its fascinations expanded in a hallucinatory fugue which I grew to love. We hear him in a hailstorm in the lumber yard with its saws buzzing on a goods train, in the deafening machine room down from the tin mine. Is he screaming in rage or agony? Is his soul railing against the grinding wheel of the hand-to-mouth life of the Depression? Or is he laughing madly as the press churns out its absurd, off-kilter parody of these few minutes from his life? It remains impenetrable.

While Charlie Patton was adept enough to toy with the recording process, even in the early days of the blues, and while Son House ignored its restrictions, running his songs over both sides of the acetate, James seems to be half-listening to that scratching sound, wondering perhaps how to live with it. The materiality of the recording has its own rhythms, its own aesthetic life, and even as he sings he is aware that it is burying him. If we

can imagine that beneath the inaudible lyrics and shattered guitar picking it is a fairly standard song, the years have yet stretched away and pulled a word punch so that, at times, "Four O'Clock Blues" haphazardly prefigures musique concrète. As reality is swallowed in loopy myth, as each gesture of the player is transfigured in the fire of the listener's imagination, so this record seems to be drawing energy into its impenetrable black heart. We see it on a shelf somewhere, too dark to make out where, like something from a Marvel comic strip, something evil and bossily menacing. We see it in a museum store, waiting with the patience of the dead for time to pass, each second that goes by makes it more meaningful but we can't yet say why. Knowledge retreats into a baffling parody of guilt as we wear away the object, even as we attempt to fathom its depths. I shut up, aware of failure. I hallucinate as I listen. The grooves in this record, the sole copy of which slops through the war and secretes itself in a safe hiding place for another quarter century, rise before me like an Iron Age fort in the gulleys of which I, a child, run shrieking my head off from joy, or fear. Night closes in and I'm waiting for the headache, for the hangover, an undertaker or for daybreak. In the gloom I run through the steps that lead to my one shot at a second take, the chance to stake my thirst at the enormous tit of some impenetrable muse.

The recording bisects Skip's life. Born in 1902, dead in 1969, did he ever hear it back, even once? He moved on, working in the mines, travelling, falling ill on the plantation down in Tunica, where John Fahey and his friends sought him out. As though time could be cheated. Once instinctive with life, the records had all disappeared, into attics, junk shops, thrown out with the trash. A group of kids find a pile in some flyblown basement and later they are seen in the street chucking them at the side of a firehouse, where they explode in loud, clear laughter. One throws a copy at a stray dog and it shatters to pieces as the creature backs away down a cluttered, dreary alley.

In the bare room above the store we watch the hands of the clock as the February afternoon drags on. The sunlight changes rapidly, there's a storm about to break, so that each take seems bathed in both night and day. The minute hand hits 12 and for a moment time implodes, sucks in sharply before exhaling clouds of dust, scattered leaves, rotten wardrobes, bones as white as a blind man's stick, vast rafters of clotted blood, layers of what we momentarily recognise as history. The machine is ready. The man in the felt hat and cheap suit gives him the nod, stubs out his cigarette, picks at his earlobe without knowing. Then the player picks up the guitar and strikes the strings.

Skip James





**JESSICA LAUREN**  
**FILM** BW2121

*"The living definition of 'next'"*

M.E.I.T. 2000's latest signing hurries on to the scene with an extraordinary, startling, bold, inventive and eccentric album.

*"A unique approach to composition and sound in a release encompassing (kind of) slow burn drum 'n' bass, (kind of) ambient and (sort of) futuristic, fusion, meticulously produced and played by human beings, its imaginative, complete and original."*  
Straight No Chaser

Look out for Jessica's 12" single featuring mixes by Red Snapper and the Harballees. BWR 2124



**FOURTH WORLD**  
**LAST JOURNEY** BW2122

Fourth World, the originators and finest exponents of 'World Jazz' and 'Global Sounds' release the final installment of Alvaro Morales and Flora Purins' band project. Including the classic "Light As A Feather" and featuring Alito and Flora at their dazzling and brilliant best, "Last Journey" is a defining moment of raw energy and creative musicianship. Taking on board their experiences and sounds from the second half of this century, Fourth World, together with guest appearance by Giovanni Hidalgo bring their collective sound and skill to shine a light directly into the next millennium.

"Last Journey" the definitive Fourth World album.



**MADALA AND MAX LÄSSER**  
**MADAMAX** BW2119

A red-hot combination of South African trance guitar rhythms with the blues - born somewhere between South Africa and Switzerland.

With the added haunting vocals of Ampasendo's Lulu Plantjé and guest appearance by hip-steel guitar maestro David Lindley, Madamax can best be described as an organic unity which encompasses the diversity of both cultures.



**SMADJ**  
**EQUILIBRISTE** BW2126

French producer and guitar/oud visionary Smadj unveils his debut album Equilibriste. An addictive fusion of North African music and electronica and bass rhythms creating an album of substance, innovation and originality.



**Musical energy and loud truth beyond 2000**

e-mail: info@meit2000.com P.O. Littlehampton Road, Worthing, West Sussex. BN13 1QE  
Tel: 01903 260633 Fax: 01903 261133

M.E.I.T. Distribution. Dealers orders through BMG: 0121 543 4100



www.meit2000.com

# REALWORLD



FOR 10 YEARS REAL WORLD HAS RELEASED AN AMAZING VARIETY OF SOUNDS AND ARTISTS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE. WHATEVER THE SOUND, WHEREVER IT'S FROM, THE QUALITY AND INTEGRITY REMAIN UNCHANGED AND CONSISTENT...SO IT IS FITTING THAT THE NEXT 10 YEARS STARTS WITH TWO VERY DIFFERENT TAKES ON THE MEETING OF THE MODERN WORLD AND AN ANCIENT CULTURE...



## JOI - ONE AND ONE IS ONE

CAT NO. CD00175

The original Asian breakbeat fusionists release their debut album. Pioneers of the (now overground) Asian Underground they mix drums, bass, sitar with breakbeats, pulsating rhythms and global melodies. An exotic journey from London's club culture to the Indian sub-continent and back.



## PANDIT SHIV KUMAR SHARMA - sampradaya

CAT NO. CD00175

A totally live, acoustic performance from the genius of the santoor (a style of hammered dulcimer) from one of the finest and most revered classical Indian masters alive today. Recorded in one session at Real World Studios with his son and disciple. Produced by John Leckie. *Breathtaking.*